

1857 IN CENTRAL BIHAR.

7208

THESIS FOR Ph. D. DEGREE IN
SOCIAL SCIENCE FACULTY (HISTORY)

OF

LALIT NARAYAN MITHILA UNIVERSITY
KAMESHWAR NAGAR, DARBHANGA.

1991



Forwarded
R.K. S.

30.11.91

Head

University Department of History
L. N. Mithila University
K. Nagar, Darbhanga

Guide & Supervisor :

Dr. Pratap Narayan Jha,

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R. K. College, Madhubani.

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Date... 20-11-91

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the subject matter of this thesis is a record of work done by the candidate himself under my guidance and supervision and that the contents of this thesis did not form a basis of the award of any previous degree to him or to the best of his knowledge to anybody else and that in habit and character the candidate is fit and proper person for the degree of Ph.D.

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Ph. D. THESIS

I N N T R O D U C T I O N



This present work is an attempt to study the history of the armed movement of 1857 in Central Bihar. Once upon a time the Central Bihar was known as Magadh. The kingdom of Magadh played a glorious and significant role in shaping the destiny of Bihar. During the British period of Modern India, the central region of Bihar consisted of Patna and Zila Bihar, presently it is Gaya, Patna and Shahabad districts. It was also known as the part of the Lower Provinces. If the North Bihar is the brain of this State, the Central Zone is the heart and soul of this ancient land.

It is remarkable to note that most of the inhabitants of this zone were the freedom loving people. They never embraced the rule and establishment of the East India Company in the valley of the Ganges and the Sone. Most of the people preferred death to disgrace. Therefore the Central Bihar became a battle field for the patriots and brave people. In this work a detailed account of the occurrences in the various parts of this region has been presented. An endeavour has also been made to give an analytical account of the attitude of the different classes of people towards the mutiny and to examine the part played by them.

It is true that the Sepoy Mutiny first broke out in Meerut on 10 May, 1857 and the entire Bihar particularly the Central Bihar was widely affected by it. Early in June (1857), the great excitement prevailed throughout the central region of the province



because of a general belief that the English East India Company's Government contemplated an active interference with the religious and social customs of the people. The Legalisation of the Hindu widow marriage was said to have offended the Hindu sepoys. The enactment was opposed to the precepts of the Hindu religion and it caused much dissatisfaction in all parts of India. The Muslims were also not happy with the rule of the East India Company. Their sentiments had already been stirred on account of the Wahabi Movement. Although the Governor-General had tried to impress that the British had no mind to interfere with the religion and customs of the people, but that was of little avail. The new cartridges were made a pretence for the armed agitation.

Indians felt that the East India Company wanted to compell the people to embrace christinity. This feeling led the people to revolt. It was a great uprising in this Lower Provinces. It is a fact that the armed revolt mutiny had been started by the military men and supported and assisted by the freedom loving people. On the other hand, some of the Landed-Chiefs helped the uprooted authorities of the company with sad and heavy hearts.

Since the town of Patna was very close to the mutineers of Dinapur, it became the scene of a serious conflict resulting in the loss of life and property. The town Patna came into limelight on account of Pir Ali, a respectable revolutionary soul who displayed bravery, presence of mind and physical strength in his encounter with the Britishers. He was a book-seller in Patna. But he was inhabitant



of Lucknow and a great supporter of the Nawab of Avadh. At the same time Ali Karim was not a less significant personality of 1857. In the district of Patna, he organised the armed revolt and spread the message of dedication and sacrifice. He was a terror to the alien ruler.

The district of Shahabad was virtually ruled and controlled by Harekrishna Singh and Nishan Singh after the flight and death of Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur. These two great personalities compelled Babu Kunwar Singh to lead the Bhojpuri men against the unjust and tyrannical rule of the company. Gaya, the headquarters of Zila Bihar, witnessed the bravery of Jeodhar Singh, under the leadership of the rebel chief, the town was once temporarily occupied by the rebels. Hyder Ali Khan was the source of inspiration to those who were eager to drive out the foreigners from this land. In this way, the entire central region was affected by the armed movement of the rebels.

But these freedom fighters of Bihar were black-listed by the officials of the East India Company. They were called robbers, plunderers and men of bad characters. Their works and activities were recorded as terrorists because the British authorities had judged their activities with jaundiced eyes and prejudiced minds. However, it appeared that they were never fair to them (the rebels). Therefore, these rebels never got a proper place in the political history of Bihar.



Besides, there was also a loyal group active in extending help to the British authorities in the hour of crisis against their own countrymen. Raja Rameshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon, Raja Hit Narain Singh of Tikari and Jay Prakash Singh of Deomunga proved pillar of strength to the company. In the very beginning of the revolt of 1857 they were silent spectators. When they felt that the rebels were not in a position to face the superior war strategy of the foreigners in their own soil, they left no stone unturned to suppress the armed movement of 1857-59. They openly advocated the virtues of the company government and called this regime as a golden period of India. It was obvious that these loyal personalities of the Central Bihar did all they could for winning the favour of the East India Company. They stood firmly behind their British masters in the hour of great crisis. For the military and psychological help, they did not get only blessings but rewards and titles from the Britishers.

To my knowledge, no work has yet been published giving a detailed account of the movement in the various parts of the Central Bihar. An effort has, therefore, been made to fill in the gap by the proposed study. Dr. R.C.Majumdar (History of the Freedom Movement in India, 3 volumes), Dr. Tara Chand (History of the Freedom Movement in India, 2 Volumes), Dr. S.N.Sen (Eighteen Fifty-seven), Dr. K.K.Datta (History of the Freedom Movement in Bihar), Prof. S.B.Chaudhari (Civil Disturbances during the British Rule in India), Theories of the Indian Mutiny and Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies), Prof. Hera Prasad Chattopadhyaya (The Sepoy Mutiny, 1857); Mr. R.R.Diwakar (Bihar through the Ages), Mr. P.C.Roy



(1857 in Bihar, Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas) and others have studied the Movement of 1857 in India at great length. But their narrative with regard to the movement in Bihar is rather sketchy and slender. In his famous book Dr. Majumdar has devoted only a few pages to the events in Bihar. He gave a brief account of the activities of Kunwar Singh of Shahabad. Other leaders did not get his attention. It seems that he had ignored the happenings in Bihar. The same case is with Dr. Tarachand who had paid scant attention to Bihar. Prof. S.N. Sen was not fair to the rebels and loyalists of Bihar which was hotbed of the hostile forces, although he devoted a few pages to the events that took place in Patna, Dinapur and Shahabad. He has confined himself to these three places only. Dr. Datta's History of Freedom Movement presents a good account of the freedom movement in Bihar but he has made only a passing reference to the uprisings in this state during the movements of 1857-58. He has devoted himself to the activities of Babu Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh. The book is silent about the organisation and motive of the leaders of the movement. No mention has been made about the attitude of the different section of the people like the Zamindars, peasants, company's employees and other urban classes like traders etc. Chaudhuri (in Civil Disturbances during British Rule in India) has dwelt with the movement outside Bihar. In Theories of the Indian Mutiny he has written about Banaras, Allahabad, Lucknow, Kanpur, Delhi, Meerut etc. There is no mention of the Mutiny in Bihar. Though Chattopadhyaya has written something about the nature of the mutiny in Bihar, he has dwelt with India as a whole and has not given any special treatment to Bihar. In Divakar's book also the account of the movement in Bihar is not



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The present work has been divided between two groups. One group is called a rebel group which consists three chapters which are following:-



(A) The rebel group:

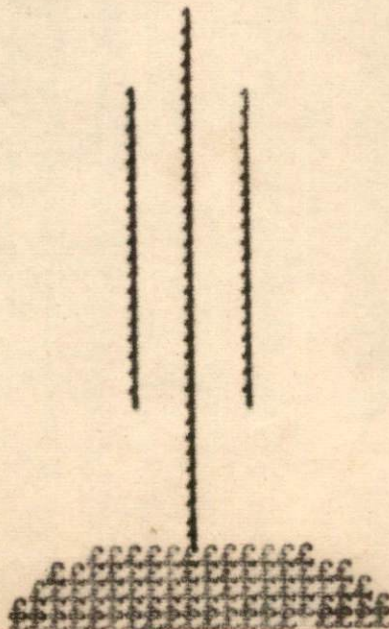
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(B) The loyalist Group :

- (1) Raja Nateshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon and Kabiruddin of Sasaram.
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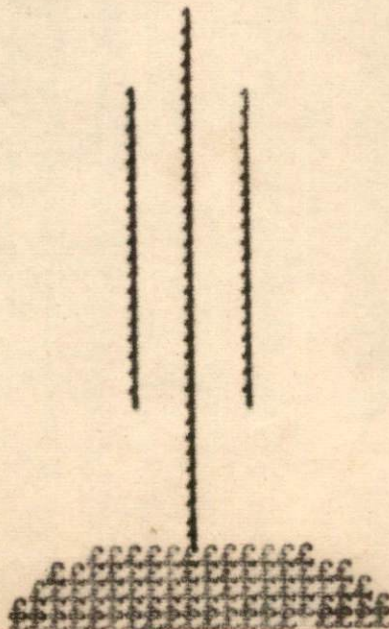
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Ph. D. THESIS

GROUP -A

REBEL



Ph. D. THESIS

JEODHAR SINGH OF
ZILA BIHAR



JEODHAR SINGH OF ZILA BIHAR.

Jeodhar Singh of Zila Bihar¹ was a great Leader of the revolt of 1857-59 in Bihar. He spear headed the armed struggle not only in Zila Bihar but in Shahabad and Palamu also. This rebel-chief was very ambitious and was very much desirous to carve out a glory for himself at the cost of the British Empire, with this end in view he displayed a highly significant, remarkable, exciting and inspiring role in the history of the Indian Movement of 1857-59. During the outbreak he became a terror to the English on account of his untiring courage and iron determination.

Tall and stout, Jeodhar Singh was not more than fifty of the outbreak of 1857.² He was born at the village of Khamini.³ in the Pargana Arwal of the Subdivision of Jahahabad.⁴ He was the son of a petty Rajput Zamindar who was renowned for bravery and courage. He had a brother named Hitam Singh.⁵

Jeodhar Singh was reported to have been very naughty and stubborn in his boyhood. He took special delight in teasing and harassing the neighbours and other villagers. He was well known for his arrogant conduct. Gradually, he developed an independent & nature and fearless attitude. That is why he became a great⁶ lover of liberty. He could get no schooling. At the same time he was highly interested in developing his fighting qualities from the earliest part of his life.



Jeodhar Singh earned a name when he assumed the ticcadari of several villages of the pargana Arwal.⁷ Later on he became a sirdar and grew into a powerful man of Arwal. His rising as a leading personality of the area provoked enmity among the Zamindars of Arwal. Higher ambition drove him into hostile camp before the actual outbreak of 1857. That is why his joining the revolt was not a sudden event but it was a foregone conclusion.

A man of suspicious and hostile nature, Jeodhar Singh was fully aware of the disquietening atmosphere of the State. He was eagerly watching the turn of events since the rising of the sepoys at various places in Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. In June 1857 he came to know that sepoys of Banaras had mutinied on 4 June, 1857. It thrilled him. Soon he made up his mind to adopt a clear line of action in support of the national endeavours.⁸ But he preferred to wait for a more favourable opportunity to wage war against the British like Pitambar Sahi and Nilambar Sahi of Palamu. At the same time he learnt that the British officials were very panicky on account of happenings in Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh). Babu Kunwar Singh's assumption of leadership of the three revolted Dinapur Regiments on 25 July, 1857 also electrified Jeodhar Singh beyond expectation. On 3 August, 1857 Alonzo Money, the Magistrate of Zila Bihar, left Gaya for Calcutta at 6 P.M. bag and baggage; soon afterwards (on 5 August) the Civil British officials abandoned Sherghati and Nawada in utter panic.⁹



The sudden and cowardice flight of the British officials from this part of the state afforded a god-sent opportunity for ambitious men like Jeodhar Singh, availed himself of this opportunity and threw an open challenge to the East India Company's authority in Bihar. In August he announced with pride and pleasure that the British rule had come to an end.¹⁰ He declared that 'Hindustani Raj Hooa, Kooer Singh Ke Raj'.¹¹ Like Muhammad Hussain Khan of Gorakhpur, he had also declared himself as an independent Chief of Arawal and began to make grants to his followers.¹²

In order to mobilise force and strengthen his position, he told people that the English were trying to strengthen the chains of India's slavery. They(the English) were cruel, cunning and ruthless. That is why, he was a staunch opponent of the government based on falsehood and injustice, tyranny and oppression.

He also told them that the officials were corrupt and intolerable, and he was not in a position to yield to unjust orders. Therefore, he revolted and became a crusader for truth and justice.¹³ In the same breath he told that he would extend greetings and kindness to the soldiers who had deserted enemy ranks. He also warned that they, who had opposed the revolution, would be punished. Safety of property would be guaranteed to the sympathisers of the revolt. He



also sought people's goodwill and their unreserved support in driving out the infidels. He created a patriotic feeling among youths and villagers by saying that people of India were brave, courageous and were capable of a fine military spirit.¹⁴ In this way he prepared the minds of people with zeal and spirit for the revolt. Consequently this brave Rajput Chief of Central Bihar had been able to inspire and gather round him a large number of loyal and dedicated fighters, one or two thousands at the beginning who soon swelled to about three thousands. In his stronghold at Khamini he had stored many months' provisions for a large army and also stored arms and ammunitions for his men. Thus Jeedhar Singh played a heroic role as the organiser of resistance against the British in Zila Bihar.

This rebel chief successfully stopped the collection of revenue and there was no official to collect it. Loyal Zamindars were heavily punished for their betrayed and treachery and they were put into an embarrassing situation with a band of dedicated and spirited men he had plundered the property of everyman who was pointed out to him as friendly to the British government.¹⁵ He also collected revenue from raiyats for his own administration. He started to play havoc with law and order situation in the north and west parts of the district.¹⁶ Consequently, with his rise in revolt, the administration of Zila Bihar was on the verge of collapse.¹⁷ Arwal, Anahha, Gole, Monora parganas and a part of Siris in Aurangabad



subdivision came virtually under his control and influence. Many of the roads had passed into his hand. He destroyed all the government buildings and most of the records therein except those carried away by the amlas to their houses prior to the outbreak.¹⁸ He also destroyed the opium cultivation and industry.¹⁹

While Gaya was occupied by the Britishers on 16 August, Jeodhar Singh's violent activities could not be challenged on account of latter's numerical strength and warlike attitude. So the rebel-chief carried on his plan and programme without any opposition. The government officials found their bitterest enemy in him and so they had a founticed view about his character and role in the revolt of 1857-59. The officials of the East India Company called him notorious, terriorist and adventurist, They accused him of unleassing a slander campaign with political motive.²⁰ They were of the opinion that Jeodhar Singh had been spreading every conceivable kind of false accusation. Of course, the Britishers had prejudiced view about his role and so they were of the opinion that originally Jeodhar Singh had not possessed magic in his character. He was a robber or maraunder and was doing much mischief with a band of Bhojpuri men and had released prisoners. He had preached hatred and violence. His main aim was to cause as much trouble as possible.²¹

In September 1857 Jeodhar Singh caught the full attention of the Britishers. Money, the British officials, organised



a counter offensive against him. He sent a batch of fifty nujeebs (Bihar armed police force) under Colvin Lindsay of the civil service and Whitecombe of the railway department, to relieve the Tehta sub-deputy opium agency, which had been seized by the followers of Jeodhar Singh. On arriving at Jahanabad ²² Lindsay attacked and burnt the village Pehta in which there were a few armed men, and defeated them killing seven, wounding five and capturing nine who were immediately made over to the authorities of Gaya for trial and punishment. ²³ Soon afterwards major Eation was sent with a party of fifty nujeebs in order to apprehend Jeodhar Singh to restore order in Hilsa. But the Latter registered a victory over the Major who managed to escape with difficulty. ²⁴ Jeodhar Singh remained in the forefront and at large.

In the course of battle he sent a message to people of Zila Bihar in which he boasted that he was a sworn enemy of the company's government and was determined to expel the infidels and ill-fated English. He was a real liberator of the district and the mission of his life was to defend liberty and to challenge the authoritarian rule. ²⁵ He also acted as a guide to the 5th Irregular Cavalry in their passage through Zila Bihar. Some of them had embraced the inspiring and courageous leadership of this Rajput hero. ²⁶



In September 1857, in order to sustain struggle the rebel chief proceeded upto the right bank of the Sone to Daudnagar²⁷ plundering, burning and murdering treacherous persons of these places.²⁸ On 12 September rebels under Jeodhar Singh arrived at the town. His followers compelled shop keepers and Businessmen of the town to sign a pledge to the effect that they would not pay revenue to the ill-fated government in future.²⁹ In fear the inhabitants of the town promised accordingly. Thereafter Jeodhar Singh with his men marched to Barun (in Aurangabad subdivision). From there he alongwith his followers returned to khamini carrying many things on bullocks which he and the rebels had plundered at that time.³⁰

Money was unable to meet the situation and save the district from onslaught of Jeodhar Singh on account of inadequate military force under him. He urgently demanded more European forces and a couple of guns but he did not get anything. Under the circumstances, Jeodhar Singh was creating an embarrassing and menacing situation for the Britishers of the district.

On 22 October 1857, Major English with a detachment of the 53rd Regiment moved in the direction of Jahanabad to intercept the warlike activities of Jeodhar Singh.³¹ The Latter was aware of the movement of the British officer and so Jeodhar



Singh made a sudden raid on the enemy and forced the Major to flee in panic and fear. Soon a party of fortytwo nujeebs had been sent to effect the capture of the rebel chief without success.³² Consequently Jeodhar Singh remained at large and was enjoying a supreme position in the southern part of the district. At the same time he was creating all kinds of trouble for the authorities.

Soon afterwards, the rebel chief had taken up his position in a strongly fortified house surrounded by lofty mud walls loop-hold. An expedition had been despatched to apprehend him but it was repulsed with a great slaughter.³³ This reverse had a demoralising effect on the officials. Henceforth, Money, the Magistrate of Zila \forall Bihar, decided not to attempt to apprehend Jeodhar Singh until he had enough and adequate force. Because it had ultimately turned out to be a wild goose chase.

Spectacular success of Jeodhar Singh gave a shattering blow to the prestige of the Britishers at Gaya and Patna. According to H.A. Samuells, the commissioner of the Patna Division, the boldness of Jeodhar Singh and his successful resistance had created considerable alarm throughout the areas between Arwal and Daudnagar.³⁴ The officials felt that as long as Jeodhar Singh was at large, improvement of the situation was a challenging task to them. In November, 1857, a large number of Nujeebs with 400 local men had been



despatched to surround him at Khamini or to keep a watch on him, so that he might not be able to escape. But this attempt was also frustrated on account of "mismanagement".³⁵ After all the rebel-chief maintained his supreme position in Central Bihar and was at the peak of glory by the end of 1857.

In January 1858, the officials of Zila Bihar launched a psychological war against him so that his numerical strength could be reduced to the maximum. They issued an appeal to the people of Zila Bihar that they were the loyal citizens of the East India Company. Henceforth, they should not extend their goodwill and cooperation to the enemy of the State. People were asked to condemn the subversive activities of Jeodhar Singh, rather to extend their support. In the same breath, they were warned and threatened that in case they failed to observe the appeal, they would be liable to the punishment of death or to the punishment of transportation for life or of imprisonment with hard labour for fourteen years and shall also forfeit all their property.³⁶ But this threat and promise had little effect on people and Jeodhar Singh evaded arrest on the ground of numerical strength and continued to enjoy the reputation of liberator of the district. It was very humiliating and intolerable for the government which was trying to bring him under control of the earliest. With this end in view one hundred sailors and its few officers had been sent to Gaya from Calcutta.³⁷



On the other hand, Jeodhar Singh started to make surprise attacks on small units of the British troops wherever he found any opportunity and retreated before strong enemy forces without offering any battle. This tactics resulted in the harassment of the British troops and he inspired so much terror by his activities that the company's government offered a reward of Rupees one thousand to any one who could arrest him.³⁸ On account of his sudden raids the officials were kept in a state of hurry and alarm. A.R. Young, Secretary to the government of Bengal informed the government of India on 20 March 1858 that Jeodhar Singh had organised his men and put up a stiff resistance to the local authorities and he had turned to be the most distinguished leader of the rebels in Zila Bihar which occupied a place of strategic importance. He concluded that there would be endless trouble so long as he remained at large.³⁹ However, great fears were naturally entertained for his early apprehension.

On 7 April 1858, Money issued an order to confiscate Jeodhar Singh's estate.⁴⁰ Accordingly, Ram Narayan Bahadur, the Deputy Collector and one Sub-Inspector of the police marched to Khamini at the head of large army. In a skirmish Jeodhar Singh put them to fight, capturing among other things, guns, swords and ammunition etc. Consequently, upto the 2nd October, 1858, his estate had not been confiscated and auctioned.⁴¹



In May Jeodhar Singh crossed the Grand Trunk Road at Jahanabad with three to four hundred men, carrying off the dak horses and burning an indigo factory in the neighbourhood.⁴² Soon thereafter, he threatened the estate of Maharani Indrajit Kunwar, wife of the late Maharaja Hitnarayan Singh of Tikari, who had changed his attitude and was working as an agent of the East India Company's government. In order to teach her a task, he threatened, her, her household, her place and other possessions with destruction, rapine and plunder.⁴³ But the rebel chief could cause on hard to the estate in view of stationing a detachment of the Madras Sepoys at Tikari. He returned to Jahanabad disappointed.

Jeodhar Singh still maintained a strong and supreme position in the subdivision of Jahanabad.⁴⁴ He was alert about his position and in order to avoid apprehension and to restrain struggle he was moving from place to place in the district. In June, 1858 Jeodhar Singh crossed the river Sone with a considerable number of rebels, plundering the country and murdering all the loyalists of the alien government. He devastated a large part of the district. He marched close upto Patna burning the dak-bangalows and eventually released the prisoners from Jails. In course of raids he fell upon the enemies and annihilated them. He also invaded W. Solno's house, the famous European industrialist and set his



house on fire.⁴⁵ He succeeded destroying the two factories of the Solno's family. He was, thus, raving the country on the right bank of the Sone. Money, the Collector, informed Samuells about all these terrorist activities of Jeodhar Singh and expressed his inability to face the challenge in absence of adequate European troops. He sent to Samuells SOS for help. Accordingly, on 23 June, 1858⁴⁷ T. Rattray, the Commandant of the Sikh Battalion, had been instructed by Samuells to march immediately for Zila Bihar to put an end to the disorders caused by Jeodhar Singh with hundred men, Sahabad. Rattray felt that the taste was hard, ordeous and full of dangers in view of the reported valour of Jeodhar Singh who had adopted the guerrilla war tactics.

On 24, 1858, Rattray crossed the Sone to restore peace in Zila Bihar after hardening his heart and gathering courage. The rebel-chief learnt about the enemy's march and sent a band of rebels to oppose the advancing march of the Sikh-chief. But Rattray annihilated them. Thereafter he marched ahead in chase of Jeodhar Singh. The rebel chief made a sudden raid on the Jahanabad thana on 23 June 1858 at the head of two hundred men. On hearing the arrival of Jeodhar Singh, the Munshifs, maliks, and other employees of the thana put themselves to flight instead of protecting it.⁴⁹ In fact, he entered the thana only with thirtyfive men without opposition and destroyed records and burnt the thana. Beni Prasad,⁵⁰ the daroga who could not escape was cut to pieces,⁵¹ and his mangled body



afterwards hung up by the heels on a tree opposite the site of the thana.⁵²

On 25 June Jeodhar Singh raided a police post and ransacked it. A barkandoz was put to death there, rest were able to escape with difficulty. On the same day he destroyed the Himanadawa Dak Bunglow. Thereafter he boasted and threatened the Britishers that he would destroy every government building between the Sone and Monghyr.⁵³ The rebel chief had also threatened Patna which was not more than ten miles from Himanadawa. Having learnt it, Samuells started arrangements for the safety of the capital. Accordingly he posted a portion of the Marine Brigade with two guns at the opium godown and stationed police at the main points so that the city could be saved from onslaught of the rebel chief. With the view of strengthening the police force at Patna, a re-inforcement of two companies of N.M.'s 10th had been brought to Patna from Dinapur. The treasure amounting to eleven lacs had been moved into the fort and records of the Collector's office were immediately removed. But Jeodhar Singh gave up the idea and planned to invade the city in view of a huge army stationed there and retreated towards the south of the district.

Hitam Singh, brother of Jeodhar Singh, was also causing trouble to the Britishers. On 29 June, Money with a company of the Madras Rifles under captain Young and five European police surprised a party of rebels under Hitam Singh in the village of Nimawan. The



rebels fled in fear and reached the banks of the river punpun, where they made a resistance, but they eventually made off, having lost three of their number.⁵⁵

Meanwhile Jeodhar Singh reached Daudnagar⁵⁶ with a view to plundering the town on 30 June, 1858.⁵⁷ On hearing this news, Rattray hastily sent forward a small party of 4 horsemen to Daudnagar with a view to infusing a little confidence into the inhabitants and to assuring them that relief was at hand.⁵⁷ His attention was drawn to the Leadership of Jeodhar Singh once against^{57*} Soon the Sikh chief himself marched towards the town at the head of three hundred men and fifty cavalry. Money, who was himself rushing towards the town, reached Daudnagar on 25 July, 1858.⁵⁸ On hearing the movements of Rattray and Money, Jeodhar Singh proceeded to the Grand-Trunk Road with a view to intercepting a batch of rebels proceeding to Uttar Pradesh. But he failed in his mission this time too.⁵⁹ Soon thereafter he decided to hasten towards Raffiganj with a view of getting away into Palamau.⁶⁰ But the rebels were chasing him with a lightening speed, so he decided to try his luck in his own district. With this end in view he abandoned his march to Palamau for the present.

On the other hand massive police hunt for Jeodhar's apprehension had been launched since 2 July, 1858. Samuells sent a huge troops to assist Money and Rattray and warned the that



complacency on the part of the officials might wash out all that had been achieved till then. Accordingly; Money and Rattry chalked out strategy and plan at Daudnagar and marched from there in two directions in the pursuit of the rebel-chief.

On the other hand, Jeodhar Singh was in an awkward position since his flight from Daudnagar. He was not in a sound position strategically. He was ill equipped this time. After all, it was courage which had compelled him to play trick upon the enemy. But he found that everything was closed for him. He knew that one hundred Sikhs had been sent to Dudbi Chauki on the grand Trunk Road and two hundred Europeans were stationed at Amar Chauki on the same road.⁶¹ He also found that Jai Prakash Singh, the Maharaja of Deo, had been working against him and extending every assistance and cooperation to Money in this hour of crisis.⁶² Men and sepoys of the Maharaja of Deo were posted at Berei between Dudpi chauki and Amar chauki. Money also requested captain Young who had just arrived at the district, to place himself at Mujeawan, half way between Kanjir and Tikari.⁶³

Against this preparation, Jeodhar Singh reached Obra with a view to organising the rebel force on 3 July, 1858. But his zeal, skill and spirit evaporated when he learnt that Money and Rattray had been coming to Obra from Daudnagar with a large number



of troops and upto date weapons in order to apprehend him⁶⁴. In order to seek Safer place, he made off towards Raffiganj,⁶⁵ on 3 July, 1858. In pursuit of the fleeing Leader, Money and Rattray started from Obra on 4 July at 3 A.M. by two different routes and reached Raffiganj. Meanwhile Jeodhar Singh alongwith rebel force arrived at Gundala.⁶⁶ From Gundala, he hurriedly went to the South. From there, he reached Banhipura on 4 July. He found there a few leading and influential⁶⁷ inhabitants were hesitating to extend their cooperation and goodwill to him in hour of great peril, while he was urgently in need of their help and cooperation. Consequently, out of anger he plundered the village and carried off two Zamindars.⁶⁸ Thereafter, he reached Kusmar at the head of one hundred sepoys with muskets, fifty sepoys without muskets and nearly three hundred rebels and the released prisoners.⁷⁰

While Rattray and Lt. Bakar under whom thirty two sawars halted at Banhipur, Money advanced towards Kusma on July 1858 with his five mounted police. On the same day at Kusma, Money came upon the rebels under Jeodhar Singh who were all under and round a large tree near the village. A deep ravine was between the rebels and Money.⁷¹ Jeodhar Singh was determined to make a stand at last at Kusma. He was also eager to face the enemy directly this time. So when Money with his force came near to him, the rebels fired upon them with muskets and one or two enfield rifles. Money and his men grew nervous at the sudden firing. The rebels put the enemy to flight in utter panic and they chased them and taunted them (Money and his men)



to cross the ravine.⁷² The first victory of the rebels under Jeodhar Singh put Money in an embarrassing situation and he was about to lose the battle once for all. In this decisive moment,⁷³ Baker and the Sikh infantry approached the battle in rescue of Money.⁷⁴ of course, the arrival of the Sikh infantry changed the course of battle as well as the history of Bihar.

At this critical juncture, the rebels under Jeodhar Singh who always encouraged and inspired them, hardened % their hearts and resolved to register victory over them once again against heavy odds. Henceforth, they came boldly forward headed by Jeodhar Singh and opened fire upon the cavalry with enfield rifles. Consequently, the cavalry fell back, then the rebels came sufficiently close to enable them to urge the Rattray's savars to come ones to them, calling them brother, and friends etc. without success.⁷⁵

Thereafter a fierce battle started at Kusma between the two formidable rival. The rebels were in no mood to flee without showing them their valour, uniring courage and boldness. When the battle was at its peak, Rattray joined the battle with all his force. It became a curse for them. They were not in a position to get any kind of help from any quarters. They were grolling weaker step by step and minutes after minutes. They were driven up between the villages, top of trees on their right flank and the nala to their front.



Taking the advantage of weakness of the rebels, Rattray steadily advanced, intending to cross the nala before he came within range. of rebel's fire. In the life and death struggle the rebels had to retire to the rear of the village. When Rattray found the village deserted by the rebels, he proceeded to the rear of the village. The loss of the village was a great disadvantage to the rebels and it gave a shattering blow to their planning and strategy. They felt that they were fighting a losing battle. Consequently, they retreated. Rattray's men opened fire upon them but that was answered sharply by Jeodhar Singh and his dedicated men.⁷⁶ On account of counter firings, the Rattray's men had to stop and their strategy failed to bring desired results.

Jeodhar Singh and his men had a temporary pleasure at the reverse of Rattray's men. They were in a precarious situation and the nala, the shelter place of the rebels, fell under the control of the Infantry and fight had been assumed in an open field. The cavalry crossed the nala, cutting up a lot of rebels who were hiding in the rollings. Jeodhar Singh and his men were shaken with fear and felt that death was at hand if they continued war. At the same time the entire Sikh infantry fell upon the rebels shouting out "Wah Gooroo jee ka Puttah"⁷⁷ and cut many of them into pieces. The released prisoners and rebels at once began to run in utter panic. But on the other hand, the rebels sepoys began to cover their retreat most gallantly. In spite of great slaughters, the



rebel sepoys under Jeodhar Singh fought in the most determined manner, taking up detached position in the ravines and were killed with considerable difficulty.

In spite of sustaining serious injuries, Jeodhar Singh was facing the onslaught of the enemy with courage and iron-determination. Finding no hope of victory, he and a party of about forty sepoys went fast and got away.⁷⁸ They took cross country where cavalry could scarcely move. Soon the rest of the rebels scattered in all directions and got much cut up.⁷⁹ In fear muskets and pouches were flung away in numbers.⁸⁰

Jeodhar Singh and the other rebels were pursued by the cavalry and a considerable portion of the infantry for six to eight miles, cutting them up in every direction. He and his few followers fled crossing the country through paddy fields, irrigation canals and sheets of water. The cavalry failed in its mission and war came to an end at 7 P.M. on 4 July, 1858.⁸¹

The village of Kusma witnessed unparalleled scene of a great battle and the tragic end of the bloody war. The ground was covered with the dead. On this battle Jeodhar Singh lost more than one hundred rebel sepoys and a few escaped prisoners.⁸²

His twenty five men were caught. Out of those men money released four men and hanged the rest.⁸³ In this decisive battle, Jeodhar



Singh's men could kill only a few enemies and wounded two Infantry.³⁴

By all accounts it appears that the defeat of Jeodhar Singh at Kusma had sealed his fate for ever. His ambition fell flat on the ground. He became a traveller in the field of war and everywhere he tried in vain to consolidate his position. The 4th July was a Doomsday in the military and political career of Jeodhar Singh who ceased to be a hero in his own district. He was forced to lead a banished life in Shahabad and Palamau and lead a career of uncertainties and full of risks, dangers and threat. Since the reverses at Kusma he began to feel that he was not destined to see India free and was waging a last battle and it was quite impossible to uproot the Company's authority and expel the Britishers. At the same time he felt that it was unsafe, risky and dangerous to live any longer in his own district. Consequently he was fleeing directly towards Shahabad where grim guerrilla war continuing under the Leadership of Amar Singh, the Younger brother of Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur.

The battle of Kusma (4 July, 1858) was a turning point in the life of Jeodhar Singh, the hero of Zila Bihar; with his defeat the district became free from onslaught of Jeodhar Singh and authorities heaved a sigh of relief. The district of Zila Bihar



was no longer in the fresh danger of clash and invasion.⁸⁵ Consequently, peace and tranquility had been restored in Zila Bihar and rag reign of terror had come to an end for ever. The village Khamini ceased to be a rallying point of the rebels thereafter. The impact if this defeat was so great and serious that the rebels under Jeodhar Singh, who previously harassed the authorities and loaded themselves with plunder, had started to draft the terror of the government to protect them.⁸⁶

After his flight from the battle field of Kusma, Jeodhar Singh went into a northerly direction with a few dedicated followers.⁸⁷ Soon afterwards, he intended crossing the grand Trunk Road the day after his defeat (5 July, 1858).⁸⁸ But he failed to cross the road. Then he bolted westward. In pursuit of the rebel chief, Rattray sent off one hundred Sikh mounted on elephants under Sirdar Bahadur Hidayat Ali in the morning of 5th July, 1858.⁸⁹ But Jeodhar Singh baffled them and crossed the Sone. However, he remained at large, eluded arrest and continued to be a terror to the government.

Facing the heavy odds and hardship he entered Shahabad with a handful men in the night of 5 July, 1858. There he found himself amongst friends and well-wishers. He was hailed as a hero by the Bhojpuris. There was enthusiasm and friendliness for him among the common people in this district.



The wants of his men were voluntarily supplied by the villagers, who were almost universally in his favour.⁹⁰

With the support and goodwill of villagers this fugitive leader launched guerrilla fighting with tact and discretion in the district. He avoided any serious engagement. His strategy consisted of hit and run. He was causing troubles and embarrassment here and there in the district with zeal and spirit. On 8 July, he entered Arrah, the district headquarters, with a body of rebels and fired some shot and burnt victor's bungalow. When a reinforcement was sent to Arrah from Patna, Jeodhar Singh fled away.⁹¹ with his subversive activities, all the security measures of the district suffered a serious set back. As a matter of fact, he remained a threat to peace in Shahabad for long.

On 17 July, he had again a small encounter with captain Rattray at Dehri, who was looking for him. Again he escaped and saved himself from falling into the hands of Rattray. He was moving from pillar to post in remaining areas and yet baffling the Britishers. Soon he raided Karnamasha where people were working as agents of the Britishers. He terrorised them and fled away when the reinforcement reached there.⁹² Towards the end of July, 1858, he with about three hundred men was hovering between Harsirganj (a large village in the North-East of Sassaram subdivision on the Koilwar-Dehri road) and Bawan.⁹³ On account of his many sudden and separate attacks at various places in Shahabad, Dughas, the British military



officer, was put into embarrassing situation and was forced to abandon his plan for sometime. Jeodhar Singh's main raids were concentrated only on villages and towns mostly south of the Ganges and West of the Sone.⁹⁴

He wielded considerable influence and commanded the respect of his section and youths. Naturally, problem of peace ever remained a problem in Shahabad also. The vigilance organisation was strengthened and tightened but it resulted in failure because Jeodhar Singh successfully eluded arrest and paralysed the administration, alongwith Amar Singh and others in Shahabad. The officials issued an Ishtihaar that Jeodhar Singh was not fighting for the interest of common people.

He was creating troubles for the peace loving people. Loot, plunder and murder was the main aim of his life. They described him as a defeatist and adventurist, and was using an escaping attitude in facing conflicts. In other words, his was an ostrich policy to hide and to walk away from conflicts in order to cover up the existence of conflicts. He also abandoned his friends in heed and used his friends as scapegoats for the exchange of his own benefits.⁹⁵

In August, 1858, one hundred European forces and few officers were despatched to apprehend him at the earliest.⁹⁶ But X this expedition resulted in failure and Jeodhar Singh remained at large. Soon another party of the 12 Irregular cavalry had been



employed in an endeavour to capture him. The Latter had a sharp encounter with the tropps, in which two cavalrymen were shot dead and their weapons fell in hands of the rebels.⁹⁷ This reverse of the enemy enhanced Jeodhar Singh's position and proved to be an event of great significance in the eyes of the revolted people. On the other hand, the 12 Irregular Cavalry had to be shortly reorganised.

Encouraged by raids, Jeodhar Singh succeeded in winning over the Bhojpuries. At the head of a considerable number of rebels, he started to burn indigo works, molesting opium grounds, murder persons who were friendly to the English in Shahabad.⁹⁸ From motive of patriotic feelings, he popularised the proverb that if everyman were to throw a stone, the English rulers would be buried beneath the shower.⁹⁹ In the same breath he told them that they were courageous and were capable of a fine military spirit.

In September, 1858, Amar Singh, who assumed the title of the Raja of Shahabad, appointed Jeodhar Singh as a viceroy of Zila Bihar.¹⁰⁰ It appears that his role had been acknowledged with appreciation by Amar Singh.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, he proved a great source of danger for the authorities. It was an uphill task for them to apprehend him. A reward of Rs.2000/- had been offered for the arrest of Jeodhar Singh, and this announcement¹⁰² was made by the Magistrate of Shahabad.¹⁰³ But this reward proved useless because Jeodhar Singh remained at large and harassed the officials and their friends and supporters.



In October, 1858, the Magistrate of Shahabad informed Samuells that Jeodhar Singh was among those fourteen rebels who had taken a prominent part in the rebellion of 1857-59.¹⁰⁴ His estate had been confiscated and auctioned.¹⁰⁵

After the publication of queen's proclamation on 1 November 1858, Samuells permitted the Magistrate of Shahabad to admit all the benefits of amnesty with the exception of Jeodhar Singh and other thirteen rebels.¹⁰⁶ But W. Grey, Secretary to the Governor General of India felt it unwise to keep fourteen men outlanded in Bihar only.¹⁰⁷ He expressed the view that some of them had been quiet for several months past. The Governor General was of the opinion that it would be well to exempt from the amnesty say five or six of the most prominent among those fourteen leaders of the movement. He instructed the commissioner of Patna to determine who should be the five or six.¹⁰⁸ to be excluded, the others being admitted to pardon.¹⁰⁹

In reply to W. Grey, H.D.H. Fergusson, the new Commissioner of Patna reported and recommended that pardon should not be offered to Jeodhar Singh and other five rebels at any cost. Jeodhar Singh was among the instigators of rebellion in Zila Bihar and Shahabad. He had been exploiting the abnormal situation to the utmost. He was charged with the murder of the Jahanabad daroga. He was a terrorist and showed peculiar hostility to all Europeans especially to the planters.¹¹⁰



Fergusson also pointed out that it was futile to trust Jeodhar Singh and to expect him to observe the same norms of conduct as other people observed. By and Large, he was suspicious, distrustful, unreasonable, cruel and even ruthless. He was, in fact, one of the most inveterate and dreadful foes of the English. Fergusson argued that to offer pardon to Jeodhar Singh would be misunderstood. It would certainly look more like weariness of the pursuit than mercy. So he recommended that to exercise mercy after his arrest than now would be fruitful.¹¹¹

The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal entirely agreed with the view expressed by the Commissioner of Patna about Jeodhar Singh. He also recommended that Jeodhar Singh, who was at large, would regard the pardon as a confession of weakness and in no sense as the exercise of mercy.¹¹² Consequently pardon had not been offered to Jeodhar Singh who proved to be an arch rebel of the Central Bihar.

In October-November of 1858, Jeodhar Singh was moving from place to place with unflagging energy to keep up the struggle in Shahabad. But he was on declining stage. The rebel partners were dwindling. By this time he began to feel that he had no leg to stand upon his strategy and keep company with Amar Singh on account of the measures taken by the government, he badly needed a hiding place. Previously he had been invited by the Sahi brothers



(Lilamber Sahi and Pitamber Sahi) of Palamau who had tried to enlist support from outside Palamau. Therefore he did not want to miss this opportunity and decided to march to the Bhogta-country. This news struck the British circle with consternation. In the meantime, captain Nation and Lieutenant Graham, the Assistant Senior commissioner of Palamu were alerted to take necessary measures for the protection of Palamu.¹¹³ In this connection Young, the English officer, instructed the commissioner of Patna that strong and effective measures should be taken so that Jeodhar Singh could not escape the notice of the authorities. In the same breath he expressed the fear that the possibility of an attempt on the part of Jeodhar Singh alongwith other rebels to seek shelter into Palamau¹¹⁴ which if successful would be productive of serious consequences.

Inspite of taking needful defensive by the British authorities of Palamau, Jeodhar Singh succeeded in sending a batch of rebels into open country to the north of Chemo. Soon thereafter the rebel-chief of the Central Bihar arrived at the frontier of Palamau at the head of nine hundred men.¹¹⁵ He was hailed and greeted by the rebels of the Bhogta clan there. A party of the Bhogtas escorted him into the Bhogta region.¹¹⁶ The authorities of Palamau had no courage to check the movement of Jeodhar Singh. They felt that it would not be expedient to risk an open engagement with the arch rebel in absence of adequate troops and weapons at the mement.¹¹⁷



Consequently, H.Graham retired to Lesligang and J.S.Davies came back to Chainpur with his troops and brought over the Tahsildari¹¹⁸ and other establishments with the government treasure from Jegisganj. Under the circumstances Jeodhar Singh reached Ahtarinagar on 26 November, 1858 without opposition.¹¹⁹

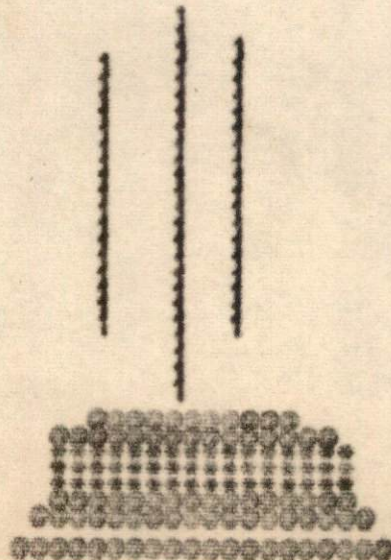
With his arrival in Palamau, a new era of conflict and danger started in this region of Bihar. He proved to be a life saving drug to the rebels headed by the Sahi-brothers. Affairs began to get more serious in this district. His presence in Palamau caused a tremendous popular armed agitation against the government among the Bhogtas and Cheros. With new zeal and spirit Jeodhar Singh again appeared on the scene and began to commit outrages in the district.¹²⁰ A threatening letter was sent to Davies warning him that the country would have no peace until Pitamber Sahi's rights were recognised. As a matter of fact, it became very clear that Jeodhar Singh had not abandoned the very idea of expelling and harassing the government for a moment. At the same time he did not abandon the object of his life, viz, struggle and love for independence.

Consequently, the whole Bhogta region had been in blaze once again.¹²¹ He chalked out a plan with the Sahi brothers of the Bhogta-tribe to assail and uproot the British authorities. Towards the end of December, Davies, the Senior Assistant Commissioner of the Lohardagga Division, had to admit that despite his occupation of some outposts, he had failed to cope with the situation.¹²²



For sometime Jeodhar Singh eluded pursuit, and wandered about in the villages and jungles of palamau. This daring and gallant fugitive kept the whole country in agitation, until at last he was caught by the British troops and paid with his life in April, 1859, when his last spark of rebellion expired.¹²³ He was court martialled¹²⁴ for "having been in rebellion and having waged war against the British government." With his death, one of the inveterate foes of the English disappeared from the stage of Bihar for ever.

Jeodhar Singh was one of the dedicated and spirited men of Bihar who laid their lives for the liberation of the country. It was he who planted a tree of liberty in the hearts of Indian. Thousands were ready to sacrifice their lives and properties in order to defend it. The secret of his success was his patience and untiring efforts. He never took a decision in a haste. So he registered a number of victories on the enemy. He rose to dizzy heights of his career and became a martyr.



FOOT NOTES:

1. The present district of Gaya was known as Zila Bihar.
2. Letter from Young, A.R., Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, No.358, 30 April, 1858, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
3. The village Khamini was at the distance of 22 miles from Shahabad.
4. Judicial proceedings, 27 June, 1859, p.732, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
5. Buckland, G.E. Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors, Vol. I, page 94.
6. Translation of an Urdu Letter preserved in the office of the District Magistrate of Gaya.
7. Judicial proceedings, 27 June 1859, p. 732, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
8. Translation of an Urdu Letter, op.Cit.
9. Buckland, op.cit.,p.73.
10. Ibid, p.76.
11. Letter from Samuells, B.A., Commissioner of the Patna Division, to A.R.Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 20 September, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
12. Majumdar, R.C., The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857, p.141.
13. Translation of an Urdu Letter, op.cit.
14. Ibid.
15. Datta, K.K., The History of Freedom movement in Bihar, vol. 1 p.53.



16. Parliamentary papers, vol.44, part III of 1857-58, further papers No.7, relatives to the mutineers in the East India, pp.105-108.
17. Roy Choudhary, P.C., Bihar District Gazetteer, Gaya, p.46.
18. Chattopadhyaya, H.P.; The Sepoy Mutiny, p.127.
19. Buckland, op.cit.p.76.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Jahanabad was midway between Patna and Gaya.
23. Parliamentary paper, vol. 44, part of 1857-58, paper No.363 (C.2295), p.44, Enclosure No.4.
24. Ibid.
25. Translation of an Urdu Letter, op.cit.
26. Chattopadhyaya, H.P., Mutiny in Bihar, Bengal, past and present January-December, 1956, p.44.
27. Daudnagar was a rich and populous Mohammanadan town.
28. Datta, K.K. Op.cit., p.53.
29. Parliamentary paper, Vol. 34, part I of 1857-58, paper No.363 (C.2295), p.76, Enclosure No.7; Narrative of Events, 26 September 1857.
30. Ibid.
31. Roy Chaudhary, op.cit.p.46.
32. Ray Buckland, op.cit.p.77.
33. Ibid.
34. Letter from Samuells, E.A., the commissioner of the Patna Division to A.R.Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 14 October, 1857, Bihar State Archives Patna.



35. Ibid.
36. The Calcutta Gazette, Wednesday, 13 January, 1858, p.56.
37. Kay, A History of the Sepoy war in India, (1857-58) Vol. III, P.594.
38. Monthly Bundles, Letter from Bell, He, officiating under Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Commissioner of the Patna Division, No.2010, 3 April, 1860, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
39. Letter from Young, A.R. Secretary to the government of Bengal to the officiating Secretary to the government of India, Foreign Department, 20 March, 1858, No.357, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
40. Translation of an Urdu Letter, op.cit.
41. Ibid.
42. Buckland, op.cit., p.88.
43. Petition of Indrajit Kunwar, Maharani of Tikari to F.S. Holliday Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Judicial Proceedings, 6 January, 1859, No.175, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
44. The Hindoo patriot, 10 June, 1858, p.179.
45. Monthly Bundles, Letter from the Commissioner of the Patna Division to Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.115 15 May, 1862, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
46. Letter from Samuells, E.A., Commissioner of the Patna Division to A.R.Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.177, judicial proceeding, 17 February, 1859, No.101, Bihar State Archives, Patna.



47. Judicial proceedings, 17 February 1859, p. 410. Bihar State Archives, Patna.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid, 10 November, 1859, p.99, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
50. Beni prasad's wife was puran Devi who got a pension of Rs.29/- per month on account of her becoming a widow, (judicial proceedings No.317,18, January, 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
51. Letter from Young, A.R. Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioner of the Patna Division Fort William, Judicial, 20, January, 1859, No.495, Judicial proceedings, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
52. Buckland, op.cit, p.93.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid, p.94.
56. Daudanagar was located at the distance of 12 miles from Grand Trunk Road.
57. Judicial proceedings, 17 February, 1859, p.410, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
58. The Calcutta Gazette, July 1858, p.1529.
- 57*. Buckland, op.cit.p.94.
58. Letter from Money, A., Magistrate and Collector of Zila Bihar, to E.A.Samuells, the Commissioner of the Patna Division, dated Sherghatty, 6 July, 1858, the Calcutta Gazette, July 1858, p.1469.



59. Letter from captain Rattray St. Commanding Bengal Sikh Battalion, to E.A. Samuells, the Commissioner of the Patna Division, dated camp, Midnapore, 5 July, 1858, the Calcutta Gazette, July, 1858, p.1529.
60. Judicial proceedings, 17 February, 1859, p.410. Bihar State Archives, Patna.
61. Letter from Money, A, Magistrate and Collector of Zila Bihar, loc.cit, p.1479.
62. Letter from Rattray, T., loc.cit. p.1529.
63. Letter from Money, A., loc.cit, p.1479.
64. Ibid.
65. Raffiganj was at the distance of 25 miles from Obra.
66. Gandala was at a distance of 2 miles from Raffiganj,
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Kusmar, was situated at the distance of 5 miles from Banhipur. This village was situated on the opposite bank of a steep with nala. It became a graveyard of the rebels on 4 July, 1858. (The Calcutta Gazette, July, 1858, p.1529.
70. Letter from Rattray, loc.cit. p.1529.
71. Letter from Money, loc. cit. p.1429.
72. Ibid.
73. When Rattray approached within two miles of Kusma, he directed Lt. Baker to proceed towards Kusma and ascertained whether the

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rebels where really there, and if so to attempt to surround the village or prevent their encamps. Lt. Baker found the village under possession of Jeodhar Singh and Money was on his mercy. (The Calcutta Gazette, July, 1858, p.1529).

74. Letter from Rattray, loc. cit. p.1529.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid. p.1530.

78. Letters from Money, loc. cit, p.1479.

79. Ibid.

80. Some rebel sepoys were determined not to retreat but died fighting to the last. Really, they preferred death to disgrace and flight. One old subedar fought most gallantly, after expending his ammunition, he called out that he would fight to the last with HIS BAYONET AND SWORD, AND WAS ONLY SILENCED BY shot through the eye. (The Calcutta Gazette, July, 1858, p.1530)

81. Letter from Rattray, loc. cit, p.1479.

82. Letter from Money, loc. cit. p.1479.

83. Out of twentyone, two were old sepoys, seven rebels and twelve escaped prisoners. (The Calcutta Gazette 5 July, 1858, p.1479)

84. Letter from Rattray, loc. cit., p.1530.

85. Monthly Bundles, Letter from Samuel, C.A. Commissioner of the Patna Division, to A.R. Young, the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.662, 8 July, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.



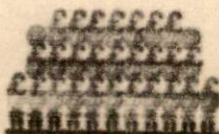
86. Ibid.
87. Letter from Rattray, Loc. cit, p.1530.
88. Letter from Money, Loc.cit, p.1479.
89. Letter from Rottray, Loc,cit, p.1530.
90. Translation of an Urdu Letter, op.cit.
91. Dodd, George, The History of the Indian Revolt and of the Expeditions to persia, china and Japan, p.540.
92. Ibid.
93. Datta, op.cit, p.56.
94. Dodd, op.cit. p.540.
95. Translation of an Urdu letter, op.cit.
96. Letter from Sanumells, E.A., the commissioner of the Patna Division to A.R.Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.177, Judicial proceedings, 17 February, 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
97. Ibid.
98. Dodd, op.cit.
99. Ball Evans, The English India, p.90.
100. The Hindoo Patriot, 23 September, 1858, p.300.
101. Ibid, 9 September, 1858, p.282.
102. It was clear that the reward offered by the government was only one thousand rupees, further sum having been offered by Solono, a planter in Shahabad. (Judicial proceedings, no.317-18, 20 January, 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.).
103. Judicial proceedings, No.317-18, 20 January, 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.



104. Judicial proceedings, 27 June, 1859, p.735, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
105. Judicial proceedings, 25 August, 1859, p.361, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
106. Datta, op.cit, p.57.
107. Letter from Grey, W, Secretary to the Government of India to the E.H.Lushington, officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Home Department, No.1870, 30 August, 1859, judicial proceedings, 29 September, 1889, p.340, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
108. Amar Singh, Jodhar Singh, Harekrishna Singh, Sudha Singh, Moeghawar Singh and Ibrahim Khan.
109. Ibid.
110. Letter from H.D.H., Fergusson, the Commissioner of the Patna Division, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, no.328 28 September, 1859, judicial proceedings, 13 October, 1859; Bihar State Archives, Patna.
111. Ibid.
112. Letter from E.H.Lushington, officiating secretary to the Government of Bengal, Wul, grey, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, No.5934, judicial proceedings, 13 October, 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
113. Chaudhauri, S.B., Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies-1857-59. p.186.
114. Monthly Bundles, Letter from A.R.Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of



115. Judicial proceedings, 13 October, 1859, p.102, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
116. Letter from J.S., captain Davies, Senior Assistant Commissioner of the Lohardagga division to captain E.T. Datton, Commissioner of the Chotanagpur division, no.127, 3 December, 1858, judicial proceedings, 6 January 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
117. Chaudhari, op.cit. p.186.
118. Letter from Captain J.S. Davies, Senior Assistant Commissioner of the Lohardagga division to captain E.T. Dalton, the Commissioner of Chotanagpur, no.127, 3 December, 1858, Judicial proceedings, 6 January, 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
119. Datta, op.cit. p.68.
120. Judicial proceedings, 27 January, 1859, p.750, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
121. Ibid.
122. Choudhari op.cit.
123. Letter from Fergusson, H.D.H., the Commissioner of the Patna Division to the secretary to the Government of Bengal, no.45 6 April, 1860, Judicial proceedings 21-22 May, 1860, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
123. Martial Law courts used to hang men on considerably less suspicious grounds. (The Hindoo patriot, 17 December, 1857, p.406.)



Ph. D. THESIS



H Y D E R A L I K H A N

O F

Z I L A B I H A R



THE ROLE OF HYDER ALI KHAN.

Hyder Ali Khan was a Leader and inhabitant of the district of Gaya which was then known as the district of Zila Bihar.¹ He was a great commoner and grassroot worker. He did not play a major and significant role as Peer Ali and Ali Karim during the revolt of 1857-59 rather he played a minor role. It is noteworthy that in the British official records it was recorded that Hyder Ali Khan was not a Leader neither of the national importance nor of the state level. He was a little known leader of his district before the revolt of 1857. He was not a messiah and a Leader of masses. He possessed no charismatic personality. To the contrary, he was a Leader of political hooligans. He had ulterior motives. He had a lack-luster personality and he was among those who had no love and respect for the British rule. He had developed contempt and hatred against the alien rule. He had used fraudulent methods against the authorities in his areas of influence during the revolt of 1857-59. At the same time Hyder Ali Khan was called a Leader of rioters, and arsonists. His nexus with the criminals of the Nawada subdivision made the political situation grave and grim in Gaya.²

But the records of the East India Company's government are not correct rather full of exaggeration, faulty and illogical. As a matter of fact, the records and correspondences of the company's administration are not believable. The ~~xx~~ real fact is that the Britishers were of the biased and prejudiced views. They



tried their best to tarnish the images of the rebels of Bihar. With this end in view, they described the rebels of the lower provinces as marauders and plunderers in their official dealings. Under the circumstances it is hard to analyse and assess the real role of Hyder Ali Khan of Nawada. However, it is admitted fact that the rebel-chief was neither a mutineer nor a conspirator. But simply he was a freedom-fighter and crusader. As a matter of fact, on account of the outbreak of the revolt of 1857-59, he came out in the lime-light. It was alleged that he took advantage of the situation and it was he who spearheaded the revolt in his subdivision after July, 1857. If the revolt did not take place in 1857, he would not come out in the picture.

So far Hyder Ali Khan's personality was concerned, he was born in a middle class Muslim family in 1817 in the Nawada subdivision of the district of Gaya. He was little educated. He had no relationship with Peer Ali and Ali Karim. At the same time he was not a Wahabi. It is not out of place to mention that there was nothing of ideologue in him. After all, he raised a banner of revolt for the Muslim cause and freedom of the country. It is not out of place to mention that Hyder Ali Khan was neither a feudal-chief nor a great influential person of his region. Little wonder he had no resources at his disposal. Above all, he did not fight for the greed of power, money or of fear or revenge.



There are many factors which were responsible for Hyder Ali Khan's revolt in August, 1857. The news of the mutiny of sepoys at Benares. On the 4th June, 1857 ran through the district as an electric shock.³ Signs of a possible outbreak appeared in the district. It is remarkable to note that at that time the district had no European soldiers. The Grand Trunk Road was also not safe for the movement of European soldiers.⁴ The general population in the district of Gaya also felt agitated as it was rumoured that bone-dust and blood of saline and oxen had been mixed in the flour that was sold in the market. It meant that the purity of religion was in a great danger. So both the Hindus and the Muslims were prepared to shed blood for the safety of their religion. Besides, the attitude of the Zamindars was not friendly to the authorities. Many of them were ready to rise against the government. So there was current of agitation and discontent prevailing in this district was full of rebels and disaffected men.⁵ Alonzo Money, the Magistrate of Gaya, described the British position in these words- "In any case physically we were much weaker clouds both from the north and the East were casting their shadows before us; no one believed the troops at Dinapur, the 5th Irregulars were said to be shaky; more than all, just at that time the march of English troops up the Trunk Road was discontinued. It was evident the time had come when the Government, having all it could do, was fain to sit and watch the result of that memorable conflict between English courage without numbers and Indian numbers without courage."⁶ Under these circumstances, the European ladies and babies were evacuated to Dinapur.



It was a fact that after June, 1857, the political situation of Bihar began to worsen day by day. Unexpected happenings were bound to take place. On the 25th of July, 1857 three native regiments at Dinapur mutinied. The news of this mutiny alerted every one in this district. On the 31st July, 1857 Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna Division, informed the Magistrate of Gaya (A. Money) of the defeat of Dunbar's party at Arrah. He also instructed the Civil authorities to proceed at once with all their force secretly and expeditiously to Patna. Money, the Magistrate of Zila Bihar, at once decided to go to Patna with all the British officers. Leaving the treasury in charge of najibs (native armed police), the British officers left Gaya at 6 P.M. on 31st July 1857.⁷ As soon as the najibs learnt of the flight of the Britishers, they broke open the jail gate and released the prisoners. The najibs and prisoners looted a little money. Left in the treasury for the food of the prisoners. Thus the district of Gaya left on the mercy of the insurgents and rebels.

The Mutiny of sepoys at Dinapur and the abandonment of the station of Gaya had provided an opportunity for some people to take up arms. Hyder Ali Khan of Nawada, Jeedhar Singh of Khamini, Pattedh Singh of Belounjal, Kaushal Singh of Khowra had risen against the English in arms in their areas of influence. The Britishers were in a menacing situation from August, 1857 on account of their revolt. Their ranks were gradually reinforced and assembling at Antipur (close to Nawada) and they even proclaimed that the company's Raj had come to an end.⁸ They were now the Rajas.



Hyder Ali Khan's joining the movement was on doubt a bold but not a sudden jump. His object was to assail the British authority. His object was the destruction of the English rule, the overthrow of the British government and the re-establishment of a Mohamadan dynasty. With this end in view he made every shop-keeper and business-man of the place to sign a pledge to the effect that they would not pay revenue to the British government in future.⁹ He was of the view that the Britishers pushed this country firmly into a debt trap. As long as they would rule over this country, there was no hope for the future. He pleaded that since the establishment of the company's rule no development of the region had been done while there were problems of roads, communications, education, agriculture, irrigation and industry which needed to be solved by the government. He wanted to the economic uplift of the state at all cost. At the same time he was against oppression and political intimidation. Above all he was dissatisfied with the sorry state of affairs in the country. So he was determined to drive out the Britishers from India at all cost. ~~At the same time he was against oppression and political~~ He seized this opportunity to execute his plan when Nawada, a significant subdivision of Zila Bihar was abandoned by the civil officers.¹⁰

After the abandonment of the civil officers (August 3, 1857), Hyder Ali Khan was all in all in the eastern part of the district. The whole area was upon his mercy. He started a



a reign of terror to the loyalists and others. He had taken possession of Rajgir with 12 to 14 hundred men. He declared that the Company's rule had ceased in the Rajgir pargana. His two followers Mehdi Ali Khan and Hussain Baksh Khan had taken part of Autee with about 1,000 men. Their followers were villagers and Rajwars with a few muskets and matchlocks but principally armed with swords and lathis.¹¹ The rebels under him destroyed the public buildings at Nawada and other places in the subdivision. They began to plunder on all sides. They had secured an old gun from the fort at Masua and created havoc.¹²

After successful operation in many parts of Nawada, Hyder Ali realised that his military success was for a short period because he had neither an organised army nor he had resources. He recalled the past and felt that no Indian chiefs could drive out the Britishers from this land. In spite of this fact, he assumed a warlike attitude. He did not bother for the future and succeeded in offending the authorities in his areas of influence.

On the last September, 1857, Money, the Magistrate of Zila Bihar, telegraphed to A.R. Young, the Secretary to the Government of Bengal that Hyder Ali Khan's rising was a small matter, still it ought to be put down. He had only a small rabble with him. The 5th Irregular cavalry which mutinied at Bhagalpur on the 14th of August, 1857, were still at Mudan Ganj six miles



from Nawada. He (Money) had not enough men to attack them and protect Gaya.¹³ Young expressed his helplessness and informed Money, the Magistrate, that there was no European soldiers to crush the movement of Hyder Ali Khan. The rebel-chief was at the height of power at that time. It was not easy for the authorities to put him down. As days passed on his influence began to grow. He was now free to plunder the whole of the area.¹⁴ On account of his rising in the east, the area near Nawada was very disturbed. It appeared that the British rule was at an end in Gaya. Money was unable to meet with the situation on account of inadequate military force under him.¹⁵

It is noteworthy that not a single rupee had been paid into the government treasury as long as Hyder Ali Khan was in possession of the eastern portions of the district. Anarchy and confusion followed his step everywhere. He succeeded in spreading terror in this subdivision.¹⁶ He shook the British power round sherghati. The Nujeebs were sent in order to arrest the rebel-chief. But this party failed in its object.¹⁷ The boldness of this man and his successful resistance had created considerable alarm through the areas between Nawada and Sherghati. Above all there was no set back in the activities of the rebels under him on account of the reoccupation of Gaya, on the morning of 16 August 1857.

Money was upset to learn the continuous hostile activities of Hyder Ali Khan. He wanted to apprehend him at the



earliest because without his arrest, normalcy could not be restored in eastern part of the district. Thereupon the Majeeds were ordered to proceed to Nawada to arrest the rebel-chief as soon as possible. They were asked to surround his house and to keep a watch so that he might not be able to escape. They were further instructed to destroy his house in case he somehow managed to escape from there. The rebel chief could not be captured and he remained at large. But his house was set on fire in September, 1857.

Stringent measures were adopted to crush this disorder. A body of European mounted police was raised to deal with the rebel-chief. An extra-police force of 250 was sent to the Nawada sub-division which hit the headlines.¹⁸ At the same time Major Nation was ordered by the commissioner of Patna to proceed to Hilsa and Nawada with 50 Majeeds. But these measures were not sufficient to apprehend the rebel-chief. Rottary, Commanding the Sikh corps at Gaya had been ordered by the Commissioner of Patna to march at once to Nawada to suppress the activity of Hyder Ali Khan. The Sikh Commander immediately started to arrest the Muslim leader with a party of 200 Sikhs. The commissioner also ordered the Magistrate of Gaya (A. Money) to help captain Rottary in every possible way.¹⁹ Besides, the Magistrate of Gaya was requested to seek help and cooperation of the Zamindars in the neighbourhood of Gaya as much as he might require.



It is noteworthy that Captain Rattary was authorised to declare on his arrival at Nawada a reward of Rs.500/- for the arrest of Hyder Ali Khan and a smaller sum for any of his followers who had been creating havoc in this part of Gaya.²⁰ The Commissioner assured captain Rattary that he would recommend to the government to invest him with the power of a commissioner under Act XIV of 1857 so that he might not have the trouble of sending in rebels including Hyder Ali Khan and his subordinates to be tried by the Judge.²¹

Thereafter the Sikh captain reached Nawada safely in the first week of September, 1857 with intention of crushing the rebel-chief at the earliest. With this end in view he began to win over the adversaries of Hyder Ali Khan. In the long run he succeeded in winning over Himat Ram of Husua and Mahantha Debundas Poory of Boodhowli- against Hyder Ali. As a matter of fact, these two persons of the subdivision of Nawada rendered every assistance in their power.²² Meanwhile the Hyder Ali Khan was declared as the outlawed and he was not offered an amnesty. No wonder he emerged as the main challenger of the English in Nawada Subdivision.

On the other hand, the rebel-chief was not in stronger position. He sought help from Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur who was eager to rescue him. But he failed to come in his support. Interestingly if he arrived in time, the Sikh captain would have to face defeat and reverses at the hand of Hyder Ali Khan and it had been difficult for the Britishers to reoccupy Nawada and Sherghati in a short period.



A good deal of uncertainty continued for a long period in Gaya. Jeodhar Singh who boasted that he would destroy every public building between the Sone and Monghyr,²³ could not offer any kind of positive help to him in time of crisis. The feudal chiefs of the neighbourhood did not come to his aid. In this way, he did not receive help and assistance from any quarters. Under the circumstances, he was not in a position to offer a bold resistance to the Captain of the Sikhs. His adherents were not military deserters but they were untrained men. So in a skirmish Haider Ali Khan was captured and two of his followers (Mehdi Ali Khan and Hussain Baksh Khan) were killed on the spot.²⁴

Curton, an employee in the Collector's office in Gaya was rewarded with two hundred rupees for arresting the rebel chief. The charge against him was that he was a traitor and a leader of plunder gang. He was a law breaker and challenger of the English Raj in the state. The charge against him was concocted, frivolous and mischievous with a view to tarnish his image. Above all, he was hanged on the charges of rebellion and plunder on September 7, 1857. After his death the outstations of Nawada and Sherghati were reoccupied on September 8, 1857²⁵. Thereafter peace and normalcy was established in this part of Zila Bihar. To some extent this victory sealed in fate of the rebel forces in Gaya.

In concluding Hyder Ali Khan's character and role during the revolt of 1857-59, that it was he who dared to rise in



in arms against the Britishers in the Nawada Subdivision because he was against oppression and tyranny. It is remarkable to note that the people were discontented against the British rule but they were reluctant to rise in revolt out of fear. In spite of heavy odds the rebel-chief organised a great army of villagers and farmers and made plan to ~~fix~~ drive the enemy out of the Subdivision. He evoked sympathy in the hearts of the people of the region. But he was not a match of the English and did not succeed in his aim and ambition. However, it is wrong to say that there was no trace of anything like popular movement in the district.

As a matter of fact, he was a fore-runner of Kausal Singh who rose in revolt against the Britisher on January 4, 1858. The question is why he failed in his effort, when he was a leader of common people and villagers. He failed in his aim and mission because he had neither concerted programme nor constructive project. Secondly, he was not well equipped with correct and trustworthy information of the movement of the enemy. He was not aware of captain Rottary's diplomacy and so he was defeated. At the same time he was not well-equipped with Latest Weapons. His followers fought against the Captain with spears, arrows and swords, consequently, his men could not face guns and accepted defeat. He could not offer a spirited fight to the Britishers. At last he died unknown and unwept for the cause of the country. One thing is very significant to learn that on account of Hyder Ali Khan's revolt, Nawada hit the headlines again and again.



Foot Notes are below:-

- (1) Gaya (The Zila Bihar) had special strategic importance because the British troops were dispatched through the Grand Trunk Road to the upper provinces. Accordingly, it became imperative for the British authority to keep control over the district. It is noteworthy that Gaya formed a part of Zila Bihar and was also its head quarters. Tayler ordered Money to maintain the occupation of a central position at all costs (Extract from Police Report of the Patna Division for 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna)
- (2) Holmes, T.R.B., A History of the Indian Mutiny, p.461.
- (3) Singh, S.B., Gaya in 1857-58, Indian History Congress, 31st session, Varanasi, 1969, p.380.
- (4) Parliamentary papers, Vol.44, part II of 1857-58, paper no.79, pp.154-55.
- (5) Tayler, W., The Patna Crisis, p.89.
- (6) Extract from the Police Report of the Patna Division for 1857 Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (7) Ibid.
- (8) Chattopadhyaya, H.P. The Sepoy Mutiny, 1857, p.127
- (9) Parliamentary papers, Vol.44, Part II of 1857-58, paper no.79, page.410.



- (11) Narrative of events, September 12, 1857.
- (12) Letter from Tayler, W., the Commissioner of Patna to A.R. Young, the Magistrate of Gaya, August 27, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (13) Telegraph messages preserved in the Gaya collector ate Records, Vol. 10, 1857, Gaya.
- (14) Singh, S.B., Loc.cit.p.384.
- (15) Chattopadhyaya op.cit., p.127
- (16) Letter from Money, A., the Magistrate of Gaya to A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, September 10, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (17) It is noteworthy that Gaya was reoccupied by the English after 13 days on 16 August, 1857, without opposition.
- (18) The average number of extra-police, entertained through the district from September to December, 1857 was about 300 men monthly. It is interesting to note that under instruction from the commissioner, dated June 12, 1857 that only men of the low caste (Dusadh and chamar) were recruited in the police force. Rajputs, Brahmins and Muslims were not trusted at that time. So they were not particularly recruited (Extract of Letter No. 324, dated 12th June, 1857 from W. Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna Division to the Magistrates of all district, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (19) Letter from the commissioner of Patna to the Secretary



to the government of Bengal, 27th and 31st August, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.

(20) Letter from the Commissioner of Patna to the Magistrate of Bihar,
14th September, 1857.

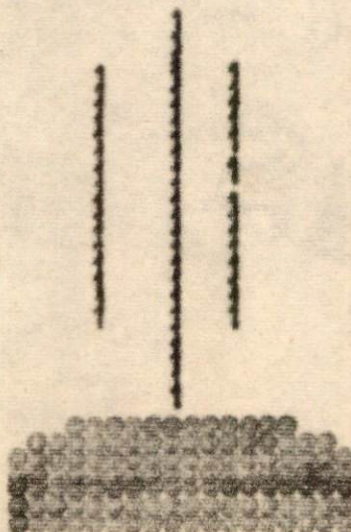
(21) Ibid.

(22) Ibid.

(23) Buckland, Bengal under the Lieutenant, Governors, Vol. I, p. 93.

(24) Letter from Samuells, E.A., Commissioner of Patna to A.R. Young
Secretary to the Government of Bengal, August 27, 1857,
No. 2278, Bihar State Archives, Patna.

(25) Roy Choudhary, Bihar District Gazetteers, Gaya, p. 46.





THE ROLE OF NISHAN SINGH OF SHAHABAD



It is correct to say that the revolt of 1857-59 had incited many leading persons of the lower provinces to try their chance for an increase of power in their respective areas. But so far Nishan Singh of Shahabad was concerned, he was not among those chieftains who were desirous of strengthening themselves in a time of anarchy and uncertainty.¹ It meant that Nishan Singh was not an ambitious handed chieftain of his district. As a matter of fact, he was not eager to earn name and fame during the political upheaval of 1857-59. By and large he was not in age of fighting against the powerful British Empire. But it was his will and stamina which compelled him to rise in revolt against the alien power. At the same time Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur, the rebel-chief of Bihar also inspired and encouraged him to participate in the armed struggle. While he was not a good general and a professional soldier, still his revolt kept the few Europeans in anxiety and weariness. He had not enough energy to plunge the whole district into disorder. After all he felt that his primary duty was to defend his mentor, the rebel-chief, Babu Kunwar Singh. It was true to say that since Nishan Singh was not destined for greater things, he joined Kunwar Singh's camp without fear and favour.

However, Nishan Singh was not a controversial figure. The British record did not mention that Nishan Singh of Shahabad was a marauder and traitor as it had mentioned about Jeodhar Singh of Bala Bihar. Hyder Ali Khan of Nawada and other leading men as marauders and petty-minded people.²



Above all, he was not a leader of the fraudulent party. But it is irony that the British document says that the revolt of 1857-59 had made him an undeserving hero. But it is not true about Nishan Singh. As a matter of fact, he was neither a plotter nor a conspirator but he was the staunch supporter of Babu Kunwar Singh, the most popular rebel-leader of Bihar. He was his (Kunwar Singh) one of the most faithful friends in time of war and peace. In fact, he was his friend, philosopher and guide.

As far as Nishan Singh's personality was concerned, he was a man of integrity and high calibre. He had inherited a large paternal property from his father Raghubir Singh of Budee (Bardeshi) in Fargana Sasaram of the district of Shahabad. He was above sixty years old when he joined the armed struggle under the leadership of Kunwar Singh in July, 1857. He was of the fair complexion, thin and middle size. At the time of rebellion he was in robust health.³ The great irony is that he had not received any formal education. After all he was fully aware of the grim situation of the country. He disliked the alien regime which was ruling with military boots and bayonets. Instead he wanted to see Kunwar Singh as the chief ruler of Bihar at all costs because he was an old acquaintance of Kunwar Singh and his great well wisher.⁴

It is admitted fact that Nishan Singh was not blessed by fate. Because he suffered a lot on account of his active participation in the armed movement. His real and revolutions



life started when Kunwar Singh (25th July, 1857) assumed the leadership of mutinous sepoye. As a matter of fact, his assumption of leadership gave the green signal for a revolt of the Bhojpuri men in the entire region. Consequently, Shahabad became the scene of a popular revolt against the British government.⁵ Since then (25th July, 1857) in every war and skirmish Nishan Singh was with his mentor, Kunwar Singh. In his defeat and victory, he (Nishan Singh) was in company with the rebel-chief of Bihar. By and large he remained steadfastly loyal to the Jagdishpur-hero and fought till his last moment with undoubted courage and vigour. It is, therefore, noted in the British record that of all the Zamindars in the Sasaram subdivision (of Shahabad District), Nishan Singh took a very prominent part in this armed conflict. Describing his role, H.C. Wake, the magistrate of Shahabad, wrote on August 15, 1857 that "Nishan Singh appears to have been in constant communication with Kunwar Singh and is now said to have collected force at Behree Ghat on the Trunk Road."⁶ So he was called a principal lieutenant and a chief associate of his mentor (Kunwar Singh) in hour of distress.⁷ It is remarkable to note that his joining the rebel's camp required a great deal of wisdom and forbearance to make sure of success. But he was ill-qualified to get major victory against the British in the battle-field.

With new zeal and spirit, Nishan Singh took active part in war against Major Eyre on August 3, 1857. After the



of the hands of Eyre, the British Major, he fled to Jagdishpur alongwith Kunwar Singh. When the British forces under Major Eyre tried to occupy Jagdishpur on August 12, 1857, he put up a great resistance to the enemy forces. But to his great surprise, he failed in his attempt and Jagdishpur was occupied by the British forces.⁸ Thereafter Nishan Singh became rootless and wanderer and fled to Juthora jungle south of Jagdishpur. Unfortunately this place was not safe for him so he marched from Juthora to Rohtas in view of getting secured place.

It is remarkable to note that in the forest of Rohtas, Kunwar Singh began to weep. He had his own explanation of the sorrow. Nishan Singh came forward and consoled him in every way. He consoled the rebel-chief by pointing out that he (Kunwar Singh) was not alone in his distress. He was his leader and honour. He would sacrifice his life for his safety and prestige. He pressurised his mentor to continue war against the English and not repent for the loss of Jagdishpur. He added that once he had drawn the sword he must either sheathe it after a complete victory or must perish with it.⁹ So there was no question of going back. In this way he played a significant part in this moment. Nishan Singh was supported by other devoted supporters of Kunwar Singh. At last he alongwith Nishan Singh and others proceeded towards Sasaram.

After August 15, 1857, Nishan Singh was much



active in the subdivision of Sasaram. Unfortunately he did not get local support because Shah Kabiruddin Ahmad who enjoyed a considerable hold over the people. Therefore, he decided to punish the loyalist zamindars including Shah Kabiruddin Ahmad. He did much mischief in the zamindari of the Shah. The authorities of Sasaram could not save the Shah against the attack of Nishan Singh. The hopeless and helpless Magistrate of Sasaram forwarded a letter to the Commissioner of Patna Division regarding the current doing and damaging of mutineers and rebels under Nishan Singh.¹⁰ Finding the grim situation in the subdivision created by the chief associate of Kunwar Singh, Soon thereafter the government of Bengal resolved to apprehend this Rajput leader. With this end in view, the administration sanctioned the offer of award of Rs.100 for the arrest of Nishan Singh in September, 1857.¹¹

Learning this news and finding difficulty in further staying in Sasaram, he did not hesitate to leave his native subdivision once for all. On 20th August, 1857, he was at Akbarpur near Rohtas. Thus he evaded arrest.

When Kunwar Singh decided to move out of Bihar with the intention of organising support outside for recovering his lost ground in Bihar on August 26, 1857, Nishan Singh decided to accompany him with Thakur Dayal Singh and Jahan Singh. In the first week of September, he reached Rewa along with Kunwar Singh where he was not well received.¹² Because Reghuraj Singh, the Raja of Rewa, was faithful and loyal to the British. Thereafter Nishan Singh along with



Kunwar Singh left Rewa and proceeded towards Banda.¹³

It was clear that in the month of September, 1857 Nishan Singh far away from his native village. His life was full of risks and dangers. At the same time there were troublesome days ahead of him. After all there was no question of returning from the war path. On 29th September, 1857 he reached Banda with Kunwar Singh who had been invited by Nana Sahib, the last Maratha chief, to join his force in attack on Kanpur. At that time Kunwar Singh had nearly 500 followers.¹⁴

Before going to Kanpur Nishan Singh joined in attack made on the fort of Vimmipar which belonged to Ajaigarh on 8th October, 1857. He succeeded in capturing the fort and the Ajaigarh-chief.¹⁵ This military achievement enhanced his prestige and inspired him in attaining his further object.

Thereafter his intention was to arrive at Kanpur as soon as possible. With this end in view he reached at Kalpi near about November 2, 1857.¹⁶ After November 7, Nishan Singh marched towards Kanpur, where the combined forces of Kunwar Singh and Nana Sahib fought against the English forces at the battle of Kanpur but without success.¹⁷

It is a great tragedy that from the month of December, 1857 onwards we do not hear anything about Nishan Singh and his mentor (Kunwar Singh) until early in 1858. When on 17th March he suddenly appeared near Azamgarh. Thereafter he and Kunwar Singh decided to make a sudden attack on Atrauli, a village a distance of



of about twenty miles from the town (Azamgarh). But the district of Azamgarh was not a safe place for the rebel-chief and his chief associate Nishan Singh. Therefore, he (Nishan Singh) decided to leave this district at the earliest. Meanwhile on 12th April, 1858, the company's government issued a proclamation offering a sum of Rs. 25,000 and a free pardon to any one who would capture and deliver Kunwar Singh to the British.¹⁸

The announcement of the government worried Nishan Singh who was responsible for his safety. He advised Kunwar Singh to leave Azamgarh soon. Accordingly Kunwar Singh left the place with some of his followers on 13 April, 1858. This time Nishan Singh did not accompany the Jagdishpur-chief. There were nearly 2,000 men under him. Soon thereafter he also proceeded towards Shahabad in route to Ghazipur.¹⁹ Being pursued by the British troops, he moved to Sikandarpur and thence down to Dorahi and Warhan, always returning as the enemy advanced.²⁰

While Lugard's party was crossing the river Toha by the side of the town of Azamgarh on 15th April by a bridge of boats, they were attacked by Nishan Singh and his men in the Azamgarh District but they repulsed the attack. Thereafter he and his men were pursued for several miles by Brigadier Douglas under orders of Lugard.

Hotly pursued by Brigadier Douglas and Colonel Gumberlege, Nishan Singh reached Maniar in the Ghazipur district in



the night of 20th, April, 1858.²¹ His presence drew a tremendous popular support in favour of the rebels. In his way back to Shahabad the villagers voluntarily supplied him and his party with food and shelter which they were badly in need of.

With the help of the local peasantry, Nishan Singh collected a number of boats and crossed the river Ganga in the night of 21st April near Ballia.²² Fortunately he reached Shahabad safely while Kunwar Singh was hit by a cannon ball and his right wrist was injured. It is remarkable to note that Nishan Singh did not go his village to meet the members of his family. Instead he preferred to remain at Jagdishpur with the dying lion of Bihar. On the 23rd April 1858, the Buddee-chief (Nishan Singh) took active part in an encounter with captain Le Grand who was badly defeated. This victory was considered a morale booster for Nishan Singh and his meutor (Kunwar Singh) who had died on 26th April, 1858 at Jagdishpur.²³ It is remarkable to note that the news of Kunwar Singh's death was carefully concealed by Nishan Singh for sometime, as his name had always been a tower of strength to the rebels in this part (Shahabad) of the country.²⁴ Later on the news of his death (Kunwar Singh) spread throughout the district like a wild fire.

After Kunwar Singh's death (April 26, 1858) the command of his troops devolved upon Amar Singh, his younger brother.²⁵ Nishan Singh, who was at large, became now Amar Singh's chief associate. At that time he was a leader of more than five hundred men.



He became a source of trouble to the authorities in the Shahabad district. It was he who was determined to continue the path which Kunwar Singh had left, with this end in view the government was anxious to apprehend Nishan Singh at the earliest. So, the British government announced a reward of Rs.10000/- for the apprehension of Nishan Singh²⁶ and a smaller reward for the capture of Sarnan Singh, a ring leader of the district, was announced. The announcement could not break his spirit. He continued to evade arrest, although he was pitted against heavy odds. Finding no chance of success in an open fight with the British forces, he adopted the guerilla tactics of harassing their movement and cutting off their supplies. At the same time in order to deceive Lugard and other British Generals, the rebels including Nishan Singh divided themselves into small bands and disappeared into the jungles, Nishan Singh began to raid the countryside and punished the Zamindars who were loyal to the British. As a matter of fact he became a terror to the authorities of Shahabad. The British troops under Lugard realised that there was little chance of taking them by any direct attack.²⁷ As jungle warfare did not suit him, Lugard shifted his camp to Harainpur, a village on the eastern side of the jungle on the road from Jagdishpur to Arrah.

In the first week of June, 1858, the Shahabad fighters lost one of their brave leaders, Nishan Singh who had been separated from the main body a few days back. He had fallen ill. So he was going to his village (Budee) on a planguin. His spirit was now broken. In this situation he was captured by Nolan, the Deputy



Superintendent, Sasaram, on the evening of June 5, 1858.²⁸ Before his arrest, his entire property had been confiscated by the British government on the 6th March, 1858.²⁹

The buddee-chief (Nishan Singh) was made over to Colonel Stratton, the officer commanding at Sasaram. The true court trial did not take place. Nishan Singh was charged with high treason, punishable by death. While no one asked for a thorough and impartial investigation of all charges levelled against the captive (Nishan Singh). At last stratton ordered his captive to be tried by court-martial and Nishan Singh was "blown away from a gun" at Sasaram in the morning of June 7, 1858.³⁰

On hearing the news of his death, on the same day Amar Singh and his party decided to leave the district. Because he began to feel that he would not achieve the object for which he and his men had been fighting since July 25, 1857. With this end in view he and his men proceeded towards Ghazipur district for their lives. Thus before the close of the year (1858) peace and normalcy returned to Shahabad.³¹

In concluding the character and role of Nishan Singh we find that he was like an oxygen cylinder to Kunwar Singh. He always defended the rebel-chief of Bihar. He was not responsible for more bloodshed and killing. He was not more hated and feared in the British camp than Amar Singh and Harekrishna Singh. It is true so long he remained physically well, he did not give in. However, we salute his martyrdom for the cause of the nation.

Foot Notes are only.

- (1) Dodd, George= The History of the Indian Revolt, 1856,57,58,
p.430.
- (2) G.E., Buckland, Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors, Vol.I,76.
- (3) Letter from H.C.Wake, Magistrate of Shahabad to Samuells,
commissioner of Patna, dated 12,January,1858,No.12.
- (4) Datta,K.K.Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh,p.96.
- (5) Chattopadhyaya, H.P.-The Sepoy mutiny,1857,p.119.
- (6) Datta, K.K. op.cit., p.98.
- (7) Ibid, p.89.
- (8) Parliamentary papers, vol.44, part I of 1857-58.
- (9) Datta,K.K.Op.cit.,p.121.
- (10) Monthly Bundles, Letter from A.R.Young, Secretary to the
government of Bengal to E.A.Samuells, Commissioner of Patna
Division,No.2628,12. September, 1857, Bihar State Archives,
Patna.
- (11) Ibid, No.2559,11 September,1857,Bihar State Archives,Patna.
- (12) Sen,S.N.=Aighteen=Fifty=Seven,p.261.
- (13) Parliamentary papers, vol.44, part I of 1857-58,paper no.363
(C.2295),p.69. National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (14) Foreign Secret Consultation, dated 30 October,1857, No.182
National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (15) Datta, K.K.op.cit.,pp.141-142.
- (16) Sen,op.cit,p.262.
- (17) Datta,op.cit.,p.142.
- (18) Ball,C,= The History of the Indian Mutiny,vol.2,p.287.



- (19) Datta, op.cit, p.151.
- (20) Letter from B.A. Samuells, Commissioner of Patna to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated 22 April, 1858, No. 4058A, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (21) Foreign secret Consultation, dated 28 May, 1858, No. 503, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (22) Foreign Secret Consultation, dated 28 May, 1858, No. 505/508, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (23) Home Public consultation, dated 9 July, 1858, No. 28, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (24) C.B. Buckland, op.cit, p.88.
- (25) Foreign Secret consultation, dated 25 June, 1858, No. 279, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (26) Monthly Bundles, Letter from A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal to B.A. Samuells, Commissioner of Patna Division, No. 2411, June 18, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (27) Datta, Biography of Kunwar Singh, op.cit, p.168.
- (28) Letter from G. Nolan, Deputy Superintendent, Sasaram Levy to A.N. Cole, Magistrate of Sasaram, dated 7 June, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (29) Judicial Department, Political, Fort William, 9th June, 1859, No. 165 Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (30) Letter from A.N. Cole, Deputy Magistrate of Sasaram to the officiating Magistrate of Shahabad dated 8 June, 1858, Letter No. 344, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (31) Sen, op.cit., p.265.



THE ROLE OF HARE KRISHNA SINGH



The district of Shahabad produced a large number of brave and courageous men who offered a great challenge and threat to the government of the East India Company during the revolt of 1857-59. It is an irony that these men were not military men. They were not the masters of strategy. They had no latest military equipment. They had no resources to wage war. After all they led the mutinous sepoys and peasants to battle-field against the Britishers during the outbreak of 1857-59. Certainly, it was the strong-will power which compelled them to wage war against the Company's government. Hare Krishna Singh of the district of Bhojpur was one of these freedom-fighters.

He was a staunch upholder of freedom. He was a great and faithful adherent of Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur. He never cared for his reputation nor bothered for a glory for himself while it was easy to make it. He had only a strong and wild longing to see his master (Babu Kunwar Singh) as the chief ruler of free Bihar at all cost.

As far as the records of the British government are concerned, Hare Krishna Singh was a real-historical figure. He was a pioneer, a selfless man and a political gazer. But the tragedy is that he was termed as a traitor by poets, writers and dramatists of the Bhojpur region.¹ It was alleged that Hare Krishna Singh had betrayed his master (Babu Kunwar Singh) and allowed the English forces



a free passage to Jagdishpur under the temptation of being rewarded with half of Kunwar Singh's estates. But this accusation was not supported by evidence of original records.² It may have been due to prejudices and bias of those who were jealous of his important position. In fact, he was actively associated with the movement. So in writing about Hare Krishna Singh, we have to be careful and at the same time we must have analytical skill so that we can do justice with him. Because he was a victim of injustice.

After Nishan Singh of the Sasaram sub-division, Hare Krishna Singh was the most leading compatriot of Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur in this movement. He was the eldest son of Dayal Singh, an influential Rajput of his Pargana. His native village was Barulehi of the Pargana Bhojpur in the district of Shahabad.³ He had four brothers whose names were Laxmi Singh, Kashi Singh, Anand Singh and Radhey Singh who were loyal and faithful to him. It is remarkable to note that these devoted and dedicated four brothers accompanied the Y elder brother (Hare Krishna Singh) in all his Indian exploits and "acted with him throughout".⁴ He was a middle sized man of about 30 years old at the time of the outbreak of the movement. He wore whiskers and monstache and brushed them backward like an up country sower.⁵ He was courteous in dealings and noble in appearance and conduct. At the same time he was a brave Rajput. He had received a little education at his village school at an early age.



Before the outbreak of the revolt, Harekrishna Singh was one of the most influential "amlaah"(subordinate staff) of Kunwar Singh and served his master as the Tahsildar (Collector of revenue) of Pargana Piro of the Shahabad district. According to Tarikh-i-Ujjainia, he was also the head of Tahsildari department(Revenue collection Department) of Pargana Piro.⁶ Because he was an efficient man. It is remarkable to note that his master(Kunwar Singh) had inherited a vast paternal property, but he failed either to supervise or manage it properly. The master had not received any formal education. Moreover, he did not take any interest in the management of his estate which became heavily encumbered.⁷ His ignorance and liberality had made him(Kunwar Singh) prey to the money lenders.⁸ The result was that with the income from his mismanaged property he found it very difficult to make his both ~~mix~~ ends meet. In course of time, he became deeply involved in debt.⁹

In order to bring reforms in financial matter of the estate, Kunwar Singh appointed Hare Krishna Singh as his chief collector who possessed a progressive view and had dynamic capacity to control the deteriorating economic situation. He came to know that nearly half the revenues were swallowed by the Jaith-raiyats, Patwaris, talukdars and other employees with no regard to the condition of the oppressed villagers. With considerable risk to himself he circumscribed the freedoms of the corrupt employees and tried his best to ban many evil practices of the estate. Inspite of



his sincere and best effort, he could not save the estate from bankruptcy. Consequently, Kunwar Singh's estate came to be mortgaged. As a matter of fact, Harekrishna Singh could not bring cheers to his mentor (Kunwar Singh) whose position became precarious.

In the political field of Bihar, the real and significant role of Hare Krishna Singh started after June, 1857. As a matter of fact, he was not a passive Observer of events taking place in India. So he was eagerly watching the turn of events since the rising of the sepoys at various places in the Gangetic Valley. It is noteworthy that he was also not in a mood of revolt against the Britishers before the month of July, 1857. But later events of the country compelled Harekrishna Singh to change his mind. Consequently, he resolved to revolt at any cost.

Before the mutiny of the sepoys of Dinapur, Begum Hazarat Mahal and Ahmadallah made a definite bid by persuading the two Rajas of Shahabad, one of Dumraon and other Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur to assume the command of the Dinapur force and to become the Governor of the Bhojpur region including Azamgarh. But unfortunately the two Rajas of the district did not dare to revolt. It is interesting to note that the courtiers of Kunwar Singh were not unanimous on the question of participating in the armed movement. One group headed by Harekrishna Singh counselled for joining the movement and the other including Babu Amar Singh were



for statusquo. Kunwar Singh was agreeable with the latter group. But Harekrishna Singh opposed the views of Amar Singh and others. At last, the party in favour of participation prevailed on Kunwar Singh. This history making juncture emerged the Piro Chief. Kunwar Singh hesitated to lead the Bihar rebellion unless the three thousand Dinapur forces sided with him. In this moment of indecision, the Piro chief made a historic tilt in favour of the Revolution. He was sent to Dinapur to ascertain the state of affairs in the contonment there shows that Kunwar Singh had much confidence in him. 10

His mission to Dinapur was a grand success. He came to Dinapur on 20th July, 1857 and made a successful deal with the three Regiments. The entire force in a body on 25th July, marched towards Arrah and Jagdishpur. They halted at Kailwarghat in their first night half. Harekrishna Singh emerged as a natural commander of the three thousand Dinapur forces, who by dint of his dash and valour made the freedom movement in Bihar an all India affair, particularly after the collapse of Lucknow fighters in March, 1858, and British conquest of Delhi on 24th September, 1857.¹¹ No wonder Kunwar Singh had no knowledge of this action of the Piro-Chief and the coming of the Dinapur Sepoys. So far as the records of the East India Company's government are concerned Harekrishna Singh had been recognised as the first man of the rebel camp of the district of Shahabad. It is correct to say that on account of the Piro-chief's manipulation



Kunwar Singh was compelled to assume the command of the revolted sepoys. If he had not gone to meet sepoys at Dinapur, it is doubtful to say that Kunwar Singh easily took the assumption of leadership of the sepoys.

The Dinapur force made a demonstration before the Arrah catchery of Kunwar Singh on 26th July, 1857, demanding Kunwar Singh of taking the leadership of the rebellion in Bihar, which Kunwar Singh accepted. But his acceptance resulted in failure because for nine months the jagdishpur hero was thrown out of the Shahabad syndrome.

It is remarkable to note that Harekrishna Singh's joining the movement was a revolutionary step in his life. Since then he engaged himself in waging war against the Britishers without thinking the consequences. Now was the time for Harekrishna Singh to show his real worth. Under his leadership the Shahabad Jail was first broken on the 27th of July, 1857.¹² The prisoners were set free and they became faithful and loyal to Piro-chief. In this way the move of Hare Krishna Singh bore fruit. He was considered as the moving spirit of the rebels and the sepoys.

Later on the mutineers attacked the district headquarters of Arrah and burnt two indigo factories under his leadership.¹³ But this time he and his rebel friends were defeated by Major Eyre's troops on 3 August, 1857.



After their defeat, the Piro-chief and his party including Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh retired to Jagdishpur being pursued by Byre.¹⁴ When the English forces had reached the neighbourhood of Jagdishpur, Kunwar Singh asked for assistance from the Rajas of Tikari, Dumraon and Rangarh to the malik of Dolipur as well as from his kinsmen against the English in that hour of great need. But their reply was not encouraging rather negative. They replied that they had not sufficient resources to take up arms against the English. So Kunwar Singh was a helpless man and a discredited leader. It was difficult for Kunwar Singh to wage war against the English without the active support of Harekrishna Singh who promised to fight with undoubted courage and vigour. Above all, on account of his age and psychology, it was very difficult for the Jagdishpur-chief to keep the Bihar-people united with a cause.

On 12 August there was an engagement between the forces of rebels under Harekrishna Singh and English. It is a fact that the Piro chief put up a desperate fight but his resistance broke down and Jagdishpur was occupied by the British forces.¹⁵ The Piro-chief with some of his supporters including Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh fled to Juthora jungle south of Jagdishpur.¹⁶

From Juthora jungle he alongwith Kunwar Singh ran towards Rohtas. From there the rebels under Hare Krishna Singh went towards Sasaram. On their way to Sasaram they came to



a hilly place, where they halted for rest. Here Kunwar Singh presented a gloomy picture on himself. He had his own explanation of sorrow of his broken heart. He confessed that he had agreed most reluctantly to be the leader of the revolted sepoys. But that had resulted in his complete discomfiture. His own village Jagdishpur, was set on fire. His dwelling house was razed to the ground. In this melancholy situation Kunwar Singh wept bitterly.¹⁷ Harekrishna Singh was accused for this tragic events.

But in this grim situation Kunwar Singh was alone. There was no alternative for him who was disappointed. Under the circumstances, the Jagdishpur-chief(Kunwar Singh)bestowed the title of Salar Jung (commander in chief) upon Harekrishna Singh. As a matter of fact, it was the title of dignity. By sheer dint of his jenious the Piro-chief became the supreme commander of the Bihar force. It is not out of place to mention that Babu Kunwar Singh, the greatest land holder of Shahabad, had quarrelled with Amar Singh, his younger brother, accusing the latter of being the cause of the disastrous defeat of Jagdishpur.¹⁸

After middle of August,1857 according to the advice of Harekrishna Singh, Kunwar Singh moved out of Bihar with the hope of getting support for recovering his lost ground in Bihar while Uttar Pradesh constituted the principal theatre of struggle.



The Piro chief was all in all in this march. In Uttar Pradesh he was so much active and so much popular that he was considered as the nephew of Kunwar Singh.¹⁹ Meanwhile the company's government announced the reward of 10,000/- rupees for the apprehension of Babu Kunwar Singh²⁰ and 5,000/- rupees for the apprehension of Harekrishna Singh.²¹

Before entering into the boundary of Uttar Pradesh, Harekrishna Singh alongwith Babu Kunwar Singh encamped at Robertsganj on the 14th August, 1857. The rebels under the Salar Jung(Harekrishna Singh)plundered all they could lay hands on, bunt the official records besides carrying off the Tahsildar.²² But it was quite impossible to prove what money was actually plundered or what saved. At the same time the thana(the police station) was partially burnt by the rebels. The tahsil house, being pukha, was also lent little injured but all the out houses, within the tahsil enclosure were destroyed.²³

The Salar Jung of Babu Kunwar Singh alongwith 2000 mutinous sepoys arrived at Sasaram on August 15, 1857. The Shah of Sasaram(Kubiruddin) was unable to thrash them(the rebels). Thereafter Harekrishna Singh and Babu Kunwar Singh alongwith supporters marched towards the hills, when 150 sepoys from Hazaribagh joined them, and burnt captain Dickens' bungalow and property, and plundered the thana.²⁴



It is remarkable to note that from Bagares upto Akherpur all was perfectly quiet. But peace of this region was disturbed when the Salar Jung reached Akherpur on August 20, 1857 with his men.²⁵ From Akherpur he decided to advance towards Mirzapur which was the heart of the district and owing to its prosperity and commercial importance to the security of British rule.²⁶ In the Mirzapur district all remained quiet south of the Ganges till the Dinapur mutineers passed through the southern Pargana, plundering as they went. An expedition was made against them from Mirzapur on the 19th and 20th August, but it was recalled without having effected any sensible result. This portion of the district had been plundered and harassed by the march through it of Harekrishna Singh, Kunwar Singh, the insurgents and mutineers with him.²⁷

Thereafter Harekrishna Singh decided to move towards Rewa.²⁸ Before going Rewa he reached Rohtasgarh on 20th August, 1857 with 15000 men four elephants, fourteen camels, a lot of horses but no ammunition. Bhojpur pensioners and his supporters constituted Babu Kunwar Singh's force.

Under the command of Hare Krishna Singh the Dinapur mutineers and Bhojpuri men crossed the Touse river. Thereafter the rebel force proceeded west-ward. They did not hesitate to plunder a town called Serajpur on August 27, 1857 while Serajpur was about 30 miles south-west of Allahabad.²⁹



Harekrishna Singh also arrived at Robertsganj. He made a most diligent search for all government servants. He burnt all the records, out offices, doors, etc. In this campaign all the chandales of Barhar had done their best to assist Harekrishna Singh and some of them had availed themselves of the opportunity to begin plundering.³⁰ Thereafter the rebels and mutineers under Harekrishna Singh arrived at Charwal on the 29th August and plundered the place. They succeeded in capturing two sepoys and two horses laden with spoil after an engagement. Soon Harekrishna Singh and Babu Kunwar Singh evacuated Charwal on the 7 August 30th, 1857.³¹

Later on Kunwar Singh encamped at a village 4 miles west of Hullia and was on the look out for all government servants. He had issued strict orders to his friends in the regiment that no representative of the government should be allowed to take up his abode or exercise his authority in those parts again and that search was to be made for the Kanungo who was to arrange about the payment of Revenue to them. The mutineers that went via Khairwa had burnt Burke, the Coal superintendent's house and some coal.³²

The rebels under Kunwar Singh had recrossed the Balan river and encamped at Barondha 5 miles south-west of Ialgunge. They



plundered in every direction. Meanwhile Harekrishna Singh reached there with another band of rebels from eastward.³³

Harekrishna Singh had encamped at Kudar about six miles south of Manda.³⁴ He sent in three camp followers with plunder of various kinds in their possession. Kunwar Singh and his followers plundered on their march. The Salar Jung left Rohtas on the 12th September and encamped at a distance of 4 miles from that fort. He also made arrangement for the close of road which went to Rewa. When he and Kunwar Singh were eight miles away from Rewa on 7 September, 1857 Raghuraj Singh, the Raja of Rewa wrote the rebel chiefs to leave his territory; if not, he would punish them. After hearing this, all the sepoys left them and ran away towards the west. At that time Harekrishna Singh had with him about 500 men.³⁵

No wonder in this critical hour the Rewa-Raja's attitude and behaviour stunned the Salar Jung and his master because the Rewa-chief (Raja Raghuraj Singh) was a near relation of Babu Kunwar Singh.³⁶ So he pinned great hopes in the Raja for getting assistance against the Britishers. But the Raja was a loyalist. Nevertheless Hare Krishna Singh persuaded the Jagdishpur-chief to enter Rewa. Accordingly, Kunwar Singh with the Ramgarh and 600 of the Dinapur mutineers marched towards Rewa on September 8, 1857. Harekrishna Singh headed about 5000 men ascended the Hattas ghat and was in the Rewa-territory. Not meeting with the desired encouragement they (Kunwar Singh and Harekrishna Singh) expected from the people of the



of the country, these leaders of Bihar retired almost as soon as they had crossed the frontier: It is remarkable to note that Hashmat Ali, Harchund Raj and others leading personalities helped the Salar-Jung and the Jagdishpur-chief in this connection.³⁷

The Rewa Raja was not in a position to protect Osborne, the political Agent at Rewa. On hearing the news of entry of Harekrishna Singh in Rewa-territory, the Raja had intimated to Osborne that he had better leave the country, as he considered himself unable to cope with the rebels. Because the Raja's people were fraternizing with the rebels under Harekrishna Singh.³⁸ Under the circumstances, Osborne had to leave Rewa immediately and had to retire to Dohoh. The Raja and his Zenana had to go to Bandhogarh.³⁹

It is interesting to note that Harekrishna Singh succeeded in gaining over the people of Rewa to his side and they (people had defied the authority of their legitimate chief.⁴⁰ Proceeded towards Banda,⁴¹ with the intention of joining the forces of Nana Sahib as Kunwar Singh had been invited by the latter to join him in an attack on Kanpur. At that time he had nearly 500 supporters.⁴²

In the way to Banda, Harekrishna Singh collected many rebels who were eager to fight against the authoritarian rule under his leadership. On the 29th September, 1857, he alongwith Kunwar Singh and 2000 men including the 40th Native Infantry reached Banda,



and were received with great honour and hospitality by the Nawab of Banda. The people of the town were called upon to supply the Nawab's wants, and if any one refused to pay, his house was levelled to the ground and himself tortured and imprisoned.⁴³

Mutineers under Harekrishna Singh found that a dispute was going on between the Nawab of Banda and Ranjor Danwa of Ajaigarh in which the Ajaigarh men had got an upper hand. Therefore, he tried to effect a compromise between the Nawab and the Ajaigarh-chief on the ground that there should be no internal strife until their common enemy the English had been entirely destroyed, but Danwa of Ajaigarh could not be persuaded. And on the 8th of October, the forces of the Nawab and the mutineers made against attack on the Ajaigarh fort at Vimmipar. It is a fact that the Ajaigarh matchlock-men bravely defended themselves against the superior and trained forces of their adversaries. But on the third day, owing to a lack of provisions and ammunition and want of water, they were compelled to surrender, and the three chiefs were imprisoned in the Nawab's place, until the day of his defeat by the British on the 9th April, 1858. When they were cruelly murdered in their prison. The fortress and buildings in Vimmipar belonging to the Ajaigarh and Gwallior chiefs had since been completely destroyed by the Nawab.⁴⁴

After having stayed at Banda for a few days more, Harekrishna Singh and his men left for Kalpi on the 18th October because he had announced his intention to offer his services to the



to the Nana and if the latter (the Nana) refused to accept his offer, he would proceed to Delhi.⁴⁵ On hearing this news the Nana Sahib wrote them (Harekrishna Singh and Kunwar Singh) requesting them to join him in an attack on Kanpur.⁴⁶ Previous to the arrival of the Gwalliar forces at Jalaun, Harekrishna Singh and the 40th Native Infantry came to Kalpi on the 19th October, 1857. They had communication with the Gwalliar mutineers. On the 7th November, the Gwalliar mutineers came in and contacted with Harekrishna Singh and the 40th Native Infantry and marched to attack Kanpur in order to defeat the authoritarian forces there.⁴⁷

Unfortunately the mutineers under Harekrishna Singh had been defeated by some of the Zamindars in the Banda district and the rebel-chief fled to Gwalliar.⁴⁸ But the districts beyond Jaunpur were still in anarchy.

Soon afterwards Harekrishna Singh went to Ayodhya with 2000 men of whom 800 only were sepoys.⁴⁹ Raja Man Singh and the Raja of Vasharpur were also with him at Ayodhya. The Salar Jung stored much ammunition at that place. At the same time quantities of wood for planking the boats had been brought over. Within a few weeks the strength of the insurgent forces under him was estimated at above, 10,000 men.⁵⁰

Thereafter the advanced guard headed by Harekrishna Singh plundered Atraulia on the 20th February, 1858.



In this attack on Atraulia the Fero chief was supported by Ghulam Hussain with several guns. Colonel Milman could not face the threat and challenge of the Shahabad Hero. There upon Harekrishna Singh and Kunwar Singh with their supporters moved to the town (Azamgarh) and occupied it on March 17, 1858.

After defeat at the hands of the rebel forces, the English forces went to Koelsa. Harekrishna Singh pursued and followed his enemy. Dewinson, the Collector, with his troops proceeded to Azamgarh while Harekrishna Singh remained in that vicinity for two or three days and then he also proceeded to Azamgarh. He with all the rebels remained in the city while the Britishers, their servants and the troops remained in the fort of Azamgarh. Firing and bullet throuling continued for 22 days. Then more troops of company came there from west and thereafter Harekrishna Singh fled away towards the east with his men. At that time Harekrishna collected five or six thousand men.⁵¹ The English forces pursued him upto the banks of Ghagra river. On 18th March, 1858 Shaikh Mannun became Tahsildar for the whole period of Harekrishna Singh's stay there; the Tahsildar spent his days in Azamgarh and Munday. But he could not control the activities of the rebel-forces. Some rebels alongwith Prakash Singh, Harekrishna Singh made Rounds in those vicinities and looted Maharajganj which is at a distance of 14 miles from Azamgarh and 15 miles from Jainpur. They attacked the Tahsil three times but the Tahsildar alongwith the old and new servants present within the premises of the Tahsil, defended it bravely. At last, the rebels took to flight. In the third time,



a fierce attack was made by the rebels on the Tahsil. They surrounded the Tahsil and fired. The Tahsildar fired in reply from within. But on account of the ammunition fell short, the officials with staff left the place and proceeded to Azamgarh. For twenty days the Tahsil remained without a Tahsildar.⁵² The flight of those men enhanced the prestige of Harekrishna Singh in the region. But his victory lasted a few months. Meanwhile he engaged himself to strengthen his position by hook and crook.

After some months Harekrishna Singh and the rebels entered this district (Azamgarh) from Awadh (Lucknow) for plunder and he stayed at Azamgarh with his men and rebel troops for 35 days. In the meantime he encountered the government troops several times. But when he felt that he could not stand before the fresh troops of the government from Lucknow, he decided to leave and proceeded to Ghazipur for fear of his life and property. Several hundred of his rebel soldiers were killed till they reached the frontiers of the district (Azamgarh).⁵³

After the fall of Azamgarh and two successive defeats of British troops, canning, the Governor General, deputed Lord Mark Kerr to proceed to Azamgarh to help Milman and Dames. Kerr reached Azamgarh on 6 April and joining the troops of Milman and Dames defeated Kunwar Singh. This defeat had a demoralising effect on



Harekrishna Singh. On 12 April, 1858 the government issued a proclamation, offering a sum of Rs.25,000/- and a free pardon to anyone who would capture and deliver Kunwar Singh to the British.⁵⁴ So the Salar Jung was very anxious for the safety of his master who was his source of strength; whose name was a watchword throughout Bihar and finally who was looked up by the Rajputs of Bihar as the chief preexcellence.⁵⁵ Under the circumstances, Harekrishna Singh was in a mood to leave Uttar Pradesh immediately. He alongwith Kunwar Singh left Azamgarh on April 13, 1858 and halted at Jagatpur Near Sugree Azamgarh on the road to Gorakhpur on April 14. On the other hand, Lugard was within seven miles of Azamgarh.⁵⁶

On the 16th April E. Lugard attacked the rebels' post at the bridge on the west side of the town. A slight resistance was made but in a very short time the whole rebel force was in full retreat on the Barhal Road. They were overtaken at Baghi Daur by the Royal Horse Artillery and cavalry of the force and their two guns and one Goordeep together with 120 carts taken from them. In this skirmish Venables was severely wounded.⁵⁷

During the 16th and 17th April they (the rebel forces under Harekrishna Singh) were engaged in digging for treasure in Babu Prasad Mahajan's house and found 72,000/- Rupees. They also burnt the tahsil and the thana (police station) records.



On the night of the 17th April they retired from a strong position they had occupied to the groves about Meghal. They were attacked by the Brigadier (Douglas) and breaking into bodies retreated partly by the lower road and partly across country to Ghosee where after setting fire to the Tahsil, they went on to Munihar. At that place Harekrishna and his mentor found themselves amongst friends and the wants of their troops were voluntarily supplied by the villagers who are almost universally in his favour, on the morning of the 21st April, the Brigadier found the rebels still at Munihar and took them by surprise. They abandoned one of their Horse Artillery guns with ammunition waggons etc. together with some elephants. They were dispersed in every direction, but during the afternoon and night appeared to have reassembled to a great extent near Saintwar, a place surrounded by very thick wood.⁵⁸ Harekrishna Singh hid himself in the evening and went off early in the morning. In this way, a stream of fugitives in several small bodies all going by different routes advanced during the night to the river at Sheopur ghat. On their way they burned the Reyoti thanna and the Byriah thana and murdered the Reyoti Thannadar.

Hearing this sad news, the Brigadier (Douglas) attacked the rebels under Harekrishna Singh near Azamgarh on April 17, 1858, drove them from their position with much slaughter and followed them to Ghosee from there they fled to Vugra and thence to Sikandarpur. The defeated rebels were closely pursued by the Brigadier.⁵⁹



Being thus defeated, Harekrishna Singh and Kunwar Singh decided to return to Shahabad as soon as possible.⁶⁰ But as the Pero chief retreated towards Jagdishpur, orders were given to the magistrates of Arrah and Chapra to destroy boats and prevent him from crossing the Ganges or the Chaghara river. Similar instructions were issued to the local Zamindars. Moreover, police parties and bodies of Zamindar's men were posted at important ghats, particularly at the Sheopur and others, where the rebels afterwards actually crossed. The villagers in Shahabad were warned that if any one of them committed acts of plunder or gave any assistance to the Salar Jung of Kunwar Singh, the entire village would be severely punished.

On the other hand, the Salar Jung was hotly pursued by Brigadier Douglas. After all, he reached Maniar in the Ghazipur District in the night of 20 April, 1858.⁶¹ His presence drew a tremendous popular support in favour of the mutineers. A large number of persons joined his party and the villagers seemed to be almost "universally in his favour".⁶² Besides, the discontented chiefs and landlords of the districts came forward to his help. With their help he succeeded in deceiving his pursuers as to the exact point at which he would cross the Ganges. The villagers voluntarily supplied him and his party with food and shelter which they were badly in need of.

It is noteworthy that in the long march from the Azamgarh district to the Sheopur ghat, Harekrishna Singh got a great deal of support and affection of every section of people including the lower



classes of the society while the rebel forces under him were hungry, beaten, dispirited like the French Army under Napolian after expedition of Russia in 1812-13.

Harekrishna Singh could not still escape the pursuing hands of Douglas who succeeded in overtaking him on 21 April at Banedah, a town (on the north bank of the Ganges) midway between Ghazipur and Chapra. The rebel force was badly defeated, Kunwar Singh received a severe wound in the thigh,⁶³ while Harekrishna Singh escaped unhurt. His chief aim was to cross the Ganges and reach his home district. He alongwith the rebel force crossed the Ganges in the night of 21 April, 1858 at Sheopur ghat, seven to ten miles from Ballia.⁶⁴ As a matter of fact, the Sheopur Zamindars heartily welcomed the Salar Jung and his party and placed 15 to 20 boats at his disposal.⁶⁵ Besides, the Arrah police, the boatmen and others were friendly to Harekrishna Singh. Decidedly, they were all instrumental in deceiving the officers responsible for the withdrawal of the boats and in furnishing them to the rebels. In fact the river Ganges was deep at this point (Sheopurghat) and though some had got off on elephants and by swimming reached the desired place without boats.⁶⁶ It seemed that Harekrishna Singh and his rebel force were flying for their lives. However, the rebel force was now in a defensive mood.

It is remarkable to note that the rebels headed and led by Harekrishna Singh did not express their desire to visit their homes to see their relatives and dispose of their plunder.



On the other hand, there was a determination to persist in hostility to government. Meanwhile a rumour spread throughout the Shahabad district that Amar Singh was negotiating with the Santhals who agreed to rise against the Britishers. Soon thereafter the officials of the Patna division began to expect some sort of disturbances in the division.⁶⁷ Accordingly there was a demand that a British force be at once sent into the Arrah district and that the police be strengthened as far as possible.⁶⁸

Harekrishna Singh and the wounded Kunwar Singh reached Jagdishpur on April 22, 1858 among Bhojpuri men with 1,000 men on foot and a few horsemen's strongly determined to continue fighting against the English.⁶⁹ The entry of Harekrishna Singh into Jagdishpur and his motive made the British government alarmed at a time when three rebel-centres-Delhi, Kanpur and Lucknow were finally crushed and had been conquered by them. It was a feeling among the Europeans that so long Harekrishna Singh remained at large in Shahabad, there would be no peace in the district. On the other hand, the British authority in Bengal had considered Kunwar Singh a dead cause because for the last nine long months he was out of Shahabad scene.⁷⁰ At the same time Harekrishna Singh was considered "a burn strategist". So it was very difficult to apprehend him. After all a force of the government proceeded from Arrah under captain Le-Grand against the Salar Jung towards Jagdishpur. But it suffered a severe repulse on the 23rd April, 1858 with heavy losses being chased upto Benu Nala about three miles from Arrah. Some of their guns were



captured by the victors (Harekrishna Singh). As it was recorded in the English file that out of the detachment of 250 or 300 men sent against Harekrishna Singh only 25 or 35 Sikhs and 7 officers returned to Arrah.⁷¹

The Commissioner of Patna wrote to Brigadier Douglas, commanding Field Force At Arrah on the 26th April, 1858-" I need hardly urge the necessity of expelling Harekrishna Singh from his position at the earliest possible period. He is now in his native country and day's delay adds to his strength and increases the prestige he has gained by his recent successes."⁷² No wonder this historic victory of Harekrishna Singh is celebrated till today as "Vijay- divas" throughout Bihar.

After the death of Kunwar Singh on 21st April, 1858 Shahabad presented as an Oasis of freedom in British India. It was a fact that the British could crush the Awadh people, but the Shahabad and Bihari people defiantly established their own government under Harekrishna Singh. People of Shahabad supported the government which the British called the rebel government was the master of the some country from Bikramganj to Palamau. The first target of this Hukumat y was to destroy the European indigo factories, wherever it were to be found. Not only that, " the city of Patna containing the opium godown with its two million of property"⁷³ and " all the country from the Soane down to Calcutta" was open to them in the month of July, 1858. The European forces coming from Crimean War could defeat



and destroy the freedom centres in Delhi, Kanpur and Lucknow, but were locked in an alarming situation and went into safety at Danapur contonment". The terfor was so sharp that remaining British force of Arrah was also "broken up and sent off to Benaras". Harekrishna Singh stroke such a terror that captain Rattray was compelled" to fall back on Arrah." Samuells, the Commissioner of Patna lamented on this European demoralisations and informed canning that the military situation was very gloomy in all the three districts of Shahabad, Gaya, and Patna. The European forces were in our contonmen-
ts" and we have left the interior of three of our best districts to be plundered by the rebels". The British prestige was stooped very low as " the destruction of European's property was taking place in abundance, of which it was difficult to form a conception. As for example, Mr. Solano's seven indigo factories were burnt. Samuells, the Commissioner, was so much defeated that he expressed his pessimism that if this panicky condition continued " there would be no more to be said." He wondered that all this was happening even after the setting of dust in North West. The European forces relieved from Lucknow were sent to these districts (Shahabad, Gaya and Patna) to prevent this last fire but in the face of this force⁷⁴ a rebel government of Harekrishna Singh) was functioning defiantly in this part of the middle country.

It is not out of place to mention that after his elder brother's death (Kunwar Singh) on 26 April, 1858 at Jagdishpur, the command of his troops devolved upon Amar Singh.⁷⁵



As a matter of fact earlier Amar Singh was not happy with the decision of his brother to participate in the movement and kept himself aloof for sometime. Moreover, he was not a good general. After all he reluctantly joined the movement. Above all he possessed firm resolution and courage. His name was in every one's mouth as the great leader in this state. So he cheerfully accepted the leadership of the rebel force under Harekrishna Singh. H.D.R. Fergusson, the Commissioner of the Patna division informed the government of Bengal on September 23, 1859 that he (Amar Singh) was very notorious for zeal and cruelty. But in a great measure he became the tool of Harekrishna Singh.⁷⁶ The government announced a reward of Rs.50,000/- for his earliest arrest. So Harekrishna Singh virtually was the main plank of the rebel government while Amar Singh was on the other hand, a mere cipher or puppet in his hand.

In the British document Harekrishna Singh was described as a brave and gallant man. He always remained cheerful and anxious to get a shot of the enemy and to do mischief to his adversary in every way. He was the most prominent rebel leader.⁷⁷ The military strength of Harekrishna Singh was "in a tolerable compact body" of the Dinapur force. Meygar Roy of Chausa, who was the chief command of the cavalry, Sudha Singh, Sheobershan Singh, who was known for cruelties practised by Harekrishna Singh and his four brothers who were accompanied him (Harekrishna Singh) and acted with throughout the movement. Rs.2,000/-reward had been announced for



arrest of these men by the government in June, 1858.⁷⁸ The government also recognised Harekrishna Singh as the actual leader of Shahabad after Kunwar Singh's death.

His force often crossed the river Karmanassa just "a few miles above Brigadier Douglas". It was often seen that European force was "crossing in one direction, while the other was crossing in the other". It also appeared that the British administrators of Buxar were "in the confidence of the enemy." Harekrishna Singh had audacity of frontally firing into captain Rattray's camp, then leisurely "marched and re-entered the jungle." Shahabad presented a defiant look of surging mass. After the death of Kunwar Singh, Harekrishna Singh's force daily augmented, "moved off very leisurely to the Soane belt," destroying the factories of the Europeans, burning the British police stations, the British officers and murdering and mutilating all who had shown any good will towards the British.

In spite of all preparations, the government was not in a position to catch Harekrishna Singh and his allies. The Salar Jung adopted a strategy of hide and seek in harassing the Britishers throughout the years of 1858 and 1859.⁷⁹ In order to apprehend the Poro-chief at the earliest who was a constant source of terror and threat to the British administrators, suggested for a general disarming order in Shahabad which was not granted.⁸⁰



Thereafter the Magistrate of Shahabad forwarded a plan of stationing troops at five or six places. This plan was accepted by the government. After all Harekrishna Singh remained at large and continued the guerrilla war.

Under the circumstances, the British considered him (Amar Singh) a poor creature and a tool in the hands of the Salarjung. Amar Singh's names were used mostly in foreign relations, in Palamau, Sambalpur, Singhbhum and Tania country. The actual Home Government was run by Harekrishna Singh. He was the military cum-consular head of the Rebel government from 26 April, 1858 to 29th August 1859. It is remarkable to note that for more than one year he ruled Shahabad from the open "Chabutara" of Jagdishpur. As a chief consul he restored Mrs. Samuells, an European, to the Douglas's camp.⁸¹ She was full of Praise for the chief consul. Not only that, Harekrishna Singh pardoned a captured Sikh Havildar. It is noteworthy that Amar Singh was generally called "Maharaj" by the people, but he was mere "no body". The records are full with Harekrishna Singh's signatures, hand-writing, hieroglyphy and his seal with the image of a half moon, that he used as a Governor of the Azad government set up at Jagdishpur.

The British military experts with wide experience in India had hoped that after the return of the / rebels into Shahabad and Bihar, they would go " to their homes to visit their relatives



and to show their captured exhibits" in order to enthuse and mobilise them. But this did not happen. The people from Azamgarh to Palamau were already "almost universally" ready in his favour.⁸²

As a matter of fact, the war like attitude of Harekrishna Singh showed that the death of Kunwar Singh did not matter to him and did not discourage him from harassing the Britishers in the district of Shahabad. On account of his hostile and aggressive attitude the district of Shahabad was not perfectly quiet and peaceful. When the small band of the rebels appeared in the district under the Salarjung, the people in general disfavoured the officials and supported the rebel leader.⁸³

Less wonder, Shahabad remained in the possession of the rebels throughout the month of July, 1858.⁸⁴ Different parties of the insurgents were still active. Meghar Singh, the right hand of Harekrishna Singh was making depredations in Ramgarh Thana. On the morning of 30 July, Amar Singh's party came into clash with the troops under colonel Walter in a village named Mahauli with some losses on their sides.⁸⁵ About 750 of Harekrishna Singh's party were killed in the encounter. Early in August they again threatened Arrah. Colonel Walter, commanding troops at Arrah, atonce left with his party to meet them. But as soon as they came within sight the rebels disappeared under cover of night on August 2.



Next morning (August 3) the rebels again approached the town and before Walter could return they had looted a few shops, released prisoners, and plundered twenty to twenty five houses. On their way back they burnt the house of a loyal Zamindar, Chaudhary Pratap Narayan Singh at Jumera. The next day (August 4) a small party of fifty savaars again threatened Arrah.⁸⁶ Douglas, in desperation, attempted to encircle the jungle and squeeze out the rebels. He began to pursue them on 13 October, 1858 but failed to overcome them. However, on 20 October, Havelock came up with them and inflicted heavy losses on them but their leader escaped and sought shelter in Kaimur Hills on left bank of Sone.⁸⁷ But here also they were not allowed to stay in peace for any length of time. Douglas came at their heels and defeated them on 24 November at a place named Selia Dahar in the Kaimur Hills. Their spirit was at last propped. Their leaders fled for their lives. The different batches of the British troops succeeded in dispersing the followers of Hare Krishna Singh and Meghar Singh in Shahabad area by the beginning of December, 1858. These leaders went underground.

Meanwhile the British government made the proclamation of Amnesty on the 1st November, 1858.⁸⁸ The state machinery declared that all savaars, deserts and rebels desirous of their return to their homes before the 1st January, 1859, they had to obtain a certificate on application to the magistrate or any other competent officer in the district.⁸⁹ But this kind of announcement of the government was good for nothing to Hare Krishna Singh. He never



dreamt to enjoy pardon. On the other hand, he felt that it was a trap. The state machinery wanted him to allure him by this kind of proclamation. Above all, he was still a leading light of the central Bihar and he had been the focus of the struggle. He was still in a position to strike fear in the hearts of the military rulers. On account of him the whole district of Shahabad was kept in a state of irritation and disquiet.⁹⁰ In order to apprehend him Brigadier Douglas had an encounter with the rebels under the Salar Jung near Jagdishpur on 25th November, 1858. But the Brigadier failed in his attempt. Harekrishna Singh remained at large and became a constant threat to the state machinery.

Meanwhile there was a proposal in the official circle that Harekrishna Singh should be pardoned immediately and would be punished later on.⁹¹ But this view was opposed by many officials. W. Grey, the Secretary to the Government of India, stated that the offer of a pardon to any of the rebels, particularly Harekrishna Singh would be misunderstood and would be taken as weakness. All attempts would be futile to arrest him. At last the Secretary was of the view that the Govt. should rather exercise mercy after the arrest and trial than now.⁹² Finally it was decided that pardon should not be offered to the Salarjung at any cost.

After all, A. Money, the District Officer of



Shahabad made a surprise visit to the Port William Circle, Calcutta. Thereafter he had initiated a personal interview with Harekrishna Singh near Jagdishpur in the last week of November, 1858. A. Money tried to convince him that all India movement had failed, as last flame of Lucknow was already extinguished in March, 1858. So he had to reconcile to the fact and reconsider about his way of life. Above all he was fighting a last battle. So he suggested that the best remedy for Harekrishna Singh was that the latter made an unconditional surrender at the earliest. Fully aware of the political and military situation in the country, the Salarjung flatly refused to do so.⁹³ While he was in a great tension and had little hope to get arms and aid from any quarters.

But lately for Harekrishna Singh, it was a hopeless venture, which had no end. All India defeat was haunting his mind. As a matter of fact, the all India political situation was very unfortunate to him. While with a purpose to attend a conference of freedom fighters of Benares, Harekrishna Singh was arrested in the way at Dinesh in the district of Benares, by the police Inspector of Dassaswamedh Ghat on 29th August, 1859.⁹⁴ His unexpected arrest brought cheers and jubilation in the British camp because he was alone who carried out the torch of freedom struggle in the entire state.

Harekrishna Singh was also confined in Arrah Jail. The officiating secretary of the government of Bengal suggested that the



trial of Harekrishna Singh would be certainly held by the Commissioner under Act XVI of 1857 in Shahabad.⁹⁵ He further added that pardon should not be granted to him at any cost. Accordingly, a fake trial was conducted by R.J. Richardson, judge and special Commissioner of Shahabad in the middle of December, 1859. The Salarjung did not agree to protect himself by any pleader. He liked to remain undefended by counsel all through the trial. Richardson offered him his direct means of aiding him in this matter, but he invariably refused to appoint any pleader to assist in his defence.⁹⁶ At the end of trial Harekrishna Singh was convicted on all charges framed against him. As Hilday had desired, he (the accused) was taken from the Arrah Jail to the Chauk at Jagdishpur, and hanged by the neck until he died.⁹⁷

Many modern writers came forward with a tribute that assured for Harekrishna Singh a place he richly deserved-"If ever a man was born great in Shahabad, it was Harekrishna Singh who was great in soul, great in thought and great in deed." Even his name sounded in other districts of Bihar and in boundary of Uttar-Pradesh and he became the legendary Salarjung. Many modern Indian writers wrote that never there was such a large crowd in Jagdishpur, nor such a sad crowd. Every face wore a settled look of grief, and many strong men were weeping like children. He passed into history, a history which every Shahabadi ought to remember. Concluding his role we can recall his valour and courage in his fight against the British rule during 1857-59 but can not emulate him in practice.

FOOT NOTES ARE HERE:

1. Indian History Congress, 43rd session, Kurukshetra, 1982, p.610.
2. Datta, K.K. Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh.
3. Home(Public) No.9-12 dated 21 October, 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
4. Ibid.
5. Tarikh-e-Ujgainia, vol.III, p.208.
6. Letter from H.C.Wake, the Magistrate of Shahabad to E.A.Samuells, the Commissioner of Patna Division, 12th January, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
7. Sen, S.N.-Eighteen Fifty Seven, p.255.
8. Letter from Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna, to the Secretary Board of Revenue, dated 19 December, 1856, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
9. Chattopadhyaya, H.P.-The Sepoy Mutiny, 1857, p.113.
10. Datta, op.cit, p.99.
11. Indian History Congress, op.cit, p.611.
12. Letter from F.S.Mount, Inspector-General of Jails, Lower Provinces to A.R.Young, Secretary to the govt.of Bengal, No.121, judicial Department, 26th May, 1859, p.446, No.46, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
13. Parliamentary papers, vol.44 part I of 1857-58, paper No.C.2294 p.23, Enclosure-37 in No.1.
14. District Gazetteer, Shahabad, p.27



15. Letter from Major V. Byre, Commanding Field Force to Major L.A.A. General, Dinapur Division, 13 August, 1857, Military Department consultation, No. 408, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
16. Parliamentary papers, vol. 44, Part I of 1857-58, paper No. C. 2294 p. 92, Enclosure 76 in no. 2.
17. Ibid, p. 121.
18. Rizvi, S.D.A.; Freedom struggle in Uttar Pradesh, Vol. IV, p. 426.
19. Ibid, p. 299.
20. Letter from E.A. Samuells, the officiating Commissioner of Patna to A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated Patna, August 13, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
21. Letter from H.D.H. Fergusson, Commissioner of Patna to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 323 dated the 23rd September, 1859, judicial Branch, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
22. Letter from the Collector of Mirzapur to the Commissioner of 5th Division, Benares, dated 20th August, 1859, No. 286, State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.
23. Rizvi, A.A.A., op.cit, p. 408.
24. Letter from Shaha Kabiruddin Ahmad to the Secretary to the Lieutenant-governor of Bengal, Sasaram, August, 15, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
25. Rizvi, op.cit, p. 412.



26. Ibid, p.410.

27. Letter from the governor-general of India in Council to the court of Directors of the East India Company, October, 3, 1857, State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.

28. Further papers (No.4) relative to the Mutinies in the East India Enclosure 131, in No.2, p.111; State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.

29. Telegraphic message No.343, from Lieutenant-Colonel, Brien Commanding at Allahabad to the Governor-General and Commander in Chief Calcutta, 28th August, 1857, State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.

30. Rizvi, op.cit, p.414.

31. Ibid, p.415

32. Ibid, p.416

33. Ibid.

34. Telegraphic Message from Lieutenant-Colonel Stranchey to the Governor-General of India in Council, Benares, September 8, 1857 State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.

35. Further papers (No.4) relative to " The Mutinies in East India, 1857, Enclosure 35, in No.4, p.225. And Foreign Secret Consultations, 30th October, 1857, No.182, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

36. Extract of the Letter from Lieutenant Clerk, 4th Madras Cavalry to the Deputy Commissioner of Nagpur, Jabalpur, September 9, 1857, State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.



37. Telegraphic message from the Lieutenant Governor, Central provinces to the Governor-General of India in Council, Benares, dated September 10, 1857, State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.
38. Extract of the Letter from Lieutenant Clerk, 4th Madras Cavalry to the Deputy Commissioner of Nagpur Jabalpur, September 9, 1857, State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.
39. *The Rewa estate lies between the Central Gangetic Provinces and the Narmada territory. This estate became very unsettled since the march of the Dinapur mutineers through the Mirzapur district. (Risvi, op.cit. p.432).
39. Bandhogarh was in Tehsil Ramnagar. It is a place of considerable archeological and historical importance.
40. Risvi; op.cit, p.430.
41. Parliamentary papers, vol.44, Part I of 1857-58, Paper No.363 (C.2295), p.69; Enclosure-2 in No.6, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
42. Foreign secret Consultation, dated 30 October, 1857, No.182, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
43. Risvi, op.cit, p.431.
44. Ibid.
45. Further papers (No.5) relative to the Mutinies in the East Indies, 1857, Enclosure No.8, p.84, State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.



46. Forging Secret Consultations, 30th October, 1857, No.204, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
47. Mutiny Narrative, North West province, Agra, 1857-, No.204, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
48. The Hindoo Patriot, November 12, 1857, p.362, National Library of India, Calcutta.
49. Letter from the commissioner of Gorakhpur to the Secretary to the Government of North-Western provinces, Allahabad, No.53, 13th February, 1858, State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.
50. Ibid.
51. Rizvi, op.cit, p.109.
52. Ibid.
53. Azamgarh Collectorate Pre-Mutiny Records, Baste No.1, Revenue Records, File No.24, P.168-Translation from the Urdu Baste, State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.
54. Ball, C; The History of the Indian Mutiny, Vol.2, p.287.
55. Rizvi, op.cit, p.443.
56. Further papers (No.8) relative to the Insurrection in the East Indies, 1858, enclosure-2 in No.13, p.141.
57. Letter from R.Devies, officiating Magistrate of Azamgarh to P.B. Gubbins, Commissioner of the 5 Division, camp Sheopur, the 23rd April, 1858.



58. Ibid.
59. Ibid, p.449.
60. Letter from E.A.Samuells, Commissioner of Patna to A.R.Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 27 April, 1858, No.4058A; Bihar State Archives, Patna.
61. Foreign Secret Consultation 28 May, 1858.
62. Foreign Secret consultation, 28 May, 1858, No.59, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
63. Foreign Secret consultation, 28 May, 1858, no.521, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
64. Foreign Secret consultation, 28 May 1858, No.505/508, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
65. Home, public Consultations, 30th April, 1858, No.50.
66. Letter from R.Davies, Officiating Magistrate of Azamgarh to F.B. Gubbins, Commissioner of 5 Division, Camp Sheepur, the 23rd April 1858.
67. Ibid,
68. Ibid.
69. Telegraphic message from Y.F.Edmonstone, Allahabad to E.A.Samuells, 30th April, 1858, State Archives of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.
70. Letter from E.A.Samuells, Commissioner of Patna Division to A.R.Young to the Government of Bengal, Home(public), No.52, 16 July, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.



71. Telegraphic message from Y.F. Edmonstone, Allahabad to E.A. Samuels, 30th April, 1858, State Archives, of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad.
72. Ibid.
73. Letter from Brigadier Lugard to E.A. Samuels, the Commissioner of Patna, 20 June, 1858.
74. Letter from E.A. Samuels, Commissioner of Patna to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal Home (public) No. 52, 16 July, 1858.
75. Foreign Secret Consultation, dated 25 June, 1858, No. 279, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
76. Letter from H.D.N. Fergusson, Commissioner of Patna Division to A.R. Young, the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 323, 23rd September, 1859, Judicial Branch, 13 October, 1859, No. 33, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
77. Judicial Department, 5 April, 1860, p. 3, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
78. Letter from H.D.N. Fergusson, Commissioner of Patna to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 323, 23rd September, 1859, Judicial Branch, 13 October 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
79. Judicial Department, Fort Willims, 13th January, 1859, p. 320, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
80. Ibid.
81. Letter from Mrs. M.F. Samuels to A. Money, Collector and Magistrate of Shahbad, 21st January, 1859, Judicial Department, 12th May, 1859, p. 223, Bihar State Archives, Patna.



82. Letter from Palton, Commissioner of Chotanagpur to A.R. Young, 16 August, 1858, Home (Public) No. 64-65 dated 10 September, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
83. Letter from H.D.H. Fergusson, Officiating Commissioner of Patna to A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 1132, April 26, 1859, Judicial Department, 5th May 1859, p. 92, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
84. Datta, Biography of Kunwar Singh etc., op.cit, p. 176.
85. Letter from Broadhurst to the Commissioner of Circuit, Patna.
86. Sen, op.cit, p. 265.
87. Malley, District Gazetteer, Shahabad, p. 35.
88. Judicial Department, 25th January, 1859, No. 49/50, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
89. Letter from C. Beadon, Secretary to the government of India to A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 2719, 11th December 1858, Judicial Department, 13 January, 1859, Fort William, p. 321, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
90. Letter from H.D.H. Fergusson, Commissioner of Patna Division, to A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 70, 18 June 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
91. Letter from W.; Grey, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department to B.R. Lushington, Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 2051, 17th October, 1859, political, Bihar State Archives, Patna.



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93. Letter from E.A. Samuells, Commissioner of Patna to the Secretary, Government of Bengal, 11th February, 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.

94. Letter from H.D.H. Fergusson, Commissioner of Patna to the Secretary, Government of Bengal, No. 323, 23rd September, 1859, Judicial Branch, 13th October, 1859, No. 33, Bihar State Archives, Patna.

95. Letter from S.H. Lushington, officiating Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to the Commissioner of Patna, Fort William, 27th October, 1859, Judicial Bihar State Archives, Patna.

96. Letter from Richardson to the Secretary, Government of Bengal, No. 122, 17th December, 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.

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Ph. D. THESIS

PEER ALI KHAN
OF
ZILAPATNA

PEER ALI KHAN

It is very difficult to assess and analyse the role and character of Peer Ali Khan who played a great part during the revolt of 1857-59. While he was neither a great religious Leader, nor a great warrior and a war Lord. At the same time he was not a powerful chieftain and influential politician. It is remarkable to note that he was also not a mutineer, not a millionaire, nor a Commander, nor a Wazir (Imperial Chancellor) not a diwan of the estate. Besides, he was not an inhabitant of Bihar, but he chose this province as a centre of the political and military activity. In spite of all these things, he was a powerful personality and a popular figure of the outbreak 1857-59. As a matter of fact, Peer Ali Khan possessed a rebellious, insurrectionary spirit and strong will. In addition to it, he had the ability and quality for organising the hostile disaffected and militant people of the Lower Provinces. Therefore, he is rightly called a great organiser of his time.

Peer Ali Khan was a man of average height and average built. However, he had come out of a very common and poor family of Uttar Pradesh which was unknown to many people. It means that his family background was not attractive and well known. But it was his qualification and merit which led him to success and a height of glory and fame much before the revolt.¹ Little wonder he was not resourceful. After all credit goes to him because he was among those who had turned the mutiny into rebellion and prepared the



ground for outbreak. As far as his personality was concerned, he always dreamed of the good times ahead. He never cared what would happen when failed in his task or mission. No wonder, he was prepared to pay the price for his failure. He was ready to endure terrible suffering rather to lead a luxurious life.

It is a matter of shame that the greatness and valor of Peer Ali was not acknowledged and recognised by the officials of the East India Company. His heroism and efficiency was not praised and appreciated by the authorities of the company's government. He was not considered worthy for any kind of reward by them. Because the rebel chief (Peer Ali Khan) had no respect and regard for the authority of the company's government. On the other hand, he considered them usurper, spoliators, robbers and pretenders of faith. He had no faith in the administration of justice of the company. Over and above, he was a great opponent of the expansion of the British Raj in the Gangetic Valley. So he was firm and aggressive in his attitude towards the authorities. With this end in view, he had no hesitation to adopt confrontation with the English. It was obvious that Peer Ali did not want to terrorise the Britishers but was eager to see the end of the company Raj at the earliest. On account of his feeling, he became a source of threat to the officials.

It is remarkable to note that unlike many Leaders of the revolt, Peer Ali Khan had no personal grudge against



the company's government. His interest was only to see the betterment and prosperity of the Nawab of Awadh while he was not amongst the claimants as the nearest of the Nawab.²

All in all, Peer Ali Khan considered the administration of Wajid Ali Shah, the Last Nawab of Awadh, as a blessing for the native people. He was a great supporter of the Nawab. He was sympathetic to him and ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of the native rule in India. And he got this unique opportunity in July, 1857 at Patna. On account of his hostile and unfriendly attitude, he incurred wrath and hatred of the Britishers. They had developed a special contempt for Peer Ali and so the contemporary British records are full of false facts against him. They had conducted tirade against him. They called him a habitual offender. In order to malign and tarnish his image, he was called a conspirator, a plotter, a fanatic, trouble maker and great manipulator. He was accused in indulging in malpractices. He was considered past master in the game of political manoeuvring. He always possessed the evil designs and has ulterior motive of fighting the government.³ Therefore, he was considered among the most disliked leaders of the revolt. In fact, they wanted to diminish his stature in the eyes of people and the harsh treatment was accorded to him. However, these allegations against him was not fair and justified.

Against this background it is said that Peer Ali Khan was not a man of ill-repute. He was not an undesired person.



He was not frail and fraudulent. He did not possess a towering personality and was not a man of letters but he was highly interested in literary work. He had tried his best to engage himself in reading and writing because he was a Wahabi.⁴ In those days a Wahabi was considered more militant than other persons. He was a regular customer of the Rissalah Jihad, a seditious pamphlet.⁵ It was an invitation to influential Muslims to aid in the common cause in the religious war against the company Raj. A ground was going on secretly for launching the jihad in North-West Provinces. Peer Ali was attached with this movement.

The rebel-chief, who had vision, a programme of action and clear thinking on the most political issues too, decided to launch his military and diplomatic work after the annexation of Avadh by Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India, in February, 1856.⁶ On account of the annexation, sixty thousand of the King's (The Nawab of Avadh) troops were at once thrown out of employment including Peer Ali. Besides, a large number of artisans, craftsmen and other employees of Nawab. They became hopeless and jobless. By his unjustified action Dalhousie created shock waves in the Gangatic Valley. It was said that the annexation of Avadh was a short of the political revolution of the major consequences. It caused uneasiness and anxiety in many walks of life. Public feelings had already been outraged.⁷ Under the circumstances, the illogical action of the government brought no cheers but tears to the millions of people.



Thereafter, like every Muslim the rebel-chief felt that his house and country were gone for ever. As a matter of fact, he considered it as a national plunder by the Britishers. He felt that the annexation of Avadh was an unwise step of the government because the existing treaties of the company with Avadh did not permit this sort of action. If this Raj was misgoverned, whose fault was it? The agreement between the two empowered to render its advice. But the British Regent did not do in a spirit of eagerness and sincerity.

As a matter of fact, the Avadh Darbar never dared to reject the advice if tendered by the Regent or the officials of the Company. At least no such gross misgovernment existed. Yet the worst state of things did not justify annexation-unless the advices were opposed by force of arms.⁸

In spite of the wounded feelings, Peer Ali Khan did not revolt in Uttar Pradesh at that time because the Nawab Wajid Ali Shah forbade all Amils, Talukdars, Zamindars, Malgozars, military officials and others including Peer Ali to take up arms in favour of him. The Nawab advised them on account they restored to resistance or rebellion. If they dared to do so, they would be punished heavily.⁹ This order of his master pained the rebel-chief greatly who was one of the faithful and obedient servants of the Avadh estate. He felt uneasiness at Lucknow and decided to leave the capital for Kanpur. Because there were no dearth of troubled and discontented people-at Kanpur.



At Kanpur he came into contract with Masoh-uz-Zaman, a prominent personality of the city. He had ability to organise and make plot against the Firangi's government. By chance the two met with some great ulterior purpose.¹⁰ Peer Ali stayed there for only six days and had frequent interviews with the Nawab's special courtiers and advisers. During his stay at Kanpur he also called on many of the native officers, sepoys of the regiments stationed there and the principal men of the town, all of them were indignant at the King's dispossession. He also met Hedayat Ali, who was a great sympathiser of ex-Nawab and a great plotter and organiser. After consultation with colleagues including Peer Ali Khan, Hedayat Ali proceeded to join his crops at Lahore and thereafter marched to Bengal. The ex-Nawab of Avadh was also with Ali at Kanpur in the first week of March, 1856.¹¹

The rebel-chief was restless at Kanpur too. He was only interested in restoring the estate of Avadh to Wajid Ali Shah. But it was a just dream. In order to influence the mind of Lord Dalhousie, the governor-general of India, he wrote an anonymous application to him on 16th March, 1856 from Kanpur. The Governor-General of India received the letter of Calcutta on 26th March, 1856. The application consisted of the following facts:-

- (1) The annexation of Avadh cannot be justified on any ground.
- (2) King of Avadh did not fight against the British like the rulers of Lahore and Gwalior. The King of Avadh ordered the army to be disarmed and removed the guns. The act of the British



government was unmagnanimous and tyrannical.

The government of Avadh was accused of his mismanagement. But on the other hand, no body had any complaint against the rule of the king of Avadh.

(3) Every one abides by the agreement and the Government should not break the same.

(4) Ghaziuddin Haidar was raised to the dignity of king from that of a minister. If the government intended to degrade the king, it ought not to have bestowed Kingship on the Nawab.

(5) King of Avadh was compelled to affix his seal against his wishes.

(6) Thousands of people who were attached to the court of Avadh are now ruined.

(7) Never such an act had been committed in the past by any ruler.¹²

It is, however, regrettable that his appeal had met with a very lukewarm response from the government and produced no desired result. In this way, his last effort to bring back the honour and throne to the king of Avadh through the peaceful method went without any concrete and positive result. Thereafter, he was compelled to take up arms for the ouster of the Britishers from this country at all costs. No wonder, the chief cause of his revolt was



was hatred of the English dominance in India. It was quite right that if the annexation of Avadh could not take place in February, 1856, Peer Ali Khan could not become a conspirator, a crusader and indulged in treasonable correspondence. It meant that the loyalty forced him to be a rebellion.

However, the rebel-chief was not in a mood of forgive and forged the officials of the Company Raj. With this end in mind he became more active after March, 1856. The influential people of Kanpur were ready to cooperate him in his Jihad against the Firangi because by that time he earned a name and fame as one of the greatest supporters of the Nawab of Avadh and he had no personal grudge against the Company Raj. Little wonder he had the backing of population which had a warlike character and had always been considered refractory.¹³

Inspite of the good will and goodwishes of the people of Avadh, he preferred to go to Bihar in order to organise the revolt against colonial power because Bihar, the heart of Lower Provinces, was the centre of supplying soldiers for the army. Besides, the town of Patna itself was to be hot-bed of Mohammadan conspiracies.¹⁴ At the same time this town commanded the land and river route from Calcutta to Banaras and formed the key to the North-Western Provinces.¹⁵ Above all, being the capital of one of the richest provinces in the country, it was also the headquarters



of the Wahabis. And every Wahabi was a political rebel. Every Muslim was a probable metineer. In fact, Bihar was the centre of anarchy and disorder and Patna was seething with sedition.

After all Patna was a new and strange place for Peer Ali Khan the rebel-chief. In spite of it he did not hesitate to go there in April, 1856. It is remarkable to note that at that time, Patna was under the administrative control of William Tayler, the Commissioner of the Patna Division, who administered over the town like a tyrannical chief. He was a cruel hearted and famous for using various repressive measures to keep his Division under control.¹⁶ Knowing all these things very well, the rebel-chief decided to reside at Patna for organising plots against the Britishers. However, it was his strong will and courage which compelled him to go there. It was his historical and secret journey of Bihar. He was not alone in his secret mission. Along with Maulvi Mehdee, who was a resident of Lucknow and a great supporter of the ex-Nawab, came to Patna.¹⁷ Besides, some of the associates of Peer Ali Khan had come over Patna to launch a stir against the company Raj. A large following of the ex-Nawab were also residing at Patna before the arrival of the rebel-chief.¹⁸ Yusuf Ali, Imamudin, Ali Karim, Waris Ali and some others reached the town ahead of him.¹⁹

The rebel-chief's arrival at Patna was a turning point in his political career. He chose to live at Patna among his own people, particularly Muslims. But no one could recognise him, he disguised himself as a book-seller. As a book-



seller he was not popular because he used to sell books less and less and spread his revolutionary ideas more and more. Thus he chose a dangerous path of life here.

At Patna Peer Ali was not an attractive man. He was not a craftman of letters. He failed to earn the good will of many influential persons of the town. Nevertheless his stay at Patna was eventful. He began to organise the meetings of disgruntled and disaffected men at night in such a manner that proof of the meetings was rendered difficult and the capture of the plotters impossible. As days passed on he became the most talked persons in his locality (All the area of Patna City) on account of his political activity. By appearance and manner he appeared to be a common man. But he possessed a huge amount of money because he had the backing of a big financier, who financed Peer Ali's organisation.

As a matter of fact, the rebel chief's organisation consisted of only disaffected and loyalist Muslims and not Hindus. At the same time he did not wish to represent the urban masses but wanted to safeguard the interest of the ex-ruler of Avadh. On account of it, he had established no connection and correspondence with Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur and other prominent Leaders of Bihar. It is also a matter of great wonder and surprise that he did not try to win over the Sepoys of the Danapur regiments without whose co-operation the overthrow of the colonial power was impossible as well as a dream. Therefore, the rebel-chief failed in his attempt and never became a popular Leader of the Bihari insurgents.



The news of outbreak (10th May, 1857) at Meerut had caused wide spread disquiet in many parts of Bihar. Later on the report from Benares, the religious capital of India, caused a panic and horror among the Europeans and many Europeans left their posts and places in the country side to seek shelter at Patna. The headquarters of the state itself was alarmed by the rumour of probable rising at Danapur on the 7th June 1857. But is a matter of great surprise that nothing happened at Danapur in the month of June. On the other hand, every day the messengers brought information of the increasing disaffection of the people and their plots of murder arson and revolt.²⁰

By all accounts it appeared that the Europeans were very much worried on the state of affairs. They were so much afraid that they expected of any untoward incident at any moment. They were apprehensive and spent their time in a state of acute anxiety. Reports, however, continued to pour about the massacre at Shahjahanpur and the fall of Kanpur, Patehpur and Farrakabad. No wonder law and order had broken in the lower provinces and people were disgruntled.

The grim political situation and the turmoil in the Gangetic valley inspired Peer Ali Khan to take a tough stand against the ruler of the country. Because he found the month of only was an opportune time for revolts while the attitude of the Danapur regiments continued to be doubtful. Besides, the earlier arrest (18 June, 1857), of the three Wahabi Maulvis who commanded



tremendous influence over the Muslim masses of Patna, compelled to raise the banner of revolt. He was so much impatient that he did not consult his colleagues, particularly Yusuf Ali, Imamudin and some others for taking up arms on July 3, 1857. His action and hasteness leaves no doubt that he had acted in panic. To save his heart which was sinking at the very thought that he would be arrested and his stature would be diminished soon, so he revolted without realising the consequences of his action. He was so desperate that he did not seek cooperation of powerful persons.

Under the circumstances, on the evening of July 3, 1857, the long apprehended rising at Patna took place under the leadership of Peer Ali. On that evening, a party of about two hundred persons who were Muslims had assembled in the house of the rebel-chief.²¹ From there, according to the pre-arranged plan, the mob came out into the streets, with two large flags. They were beating drums and shouting "Ali"; "Ali". Thereafter the rebels and their leader proceeded to the Roman Catholic Mission in Patna City with the intention of murdering the priest.²² They made a furious attack on the Cathedral. The priest and other inmates could save themselves with great difficulty.²³

The news of revolt of Peer Ali spread like wild fire in the city. It was a shock wave to the Britishers. So when this news reached the opium godown, the Deputy Opium Agent, Dr. R. Lyell



took a body of 50 Nujeeb guards, 8 Sikh sepoyes and a Subedar named Muhammad Hussain and proceeded towards the Church. There they were told that the insurgents had left the place and were standing on the Chowk of Patna City.²⁴ Thereupon the doctor moved to the place where the insurgents were shouting slogans of "Ali", "Ali". As soon as Iyell approached them he was fired upon. When he fell down on the ground, he was beheaded on the spot in Mohalla Macharhatta in Patna City.²⁵ The sight of a fallen European stimulated the enthusiasm. But the Nujeeb guards, seeing their leader killed, opened fire which resulted in the death of one rebel. Others took to their heels.²⁶

At this stage another party of Sikh Sepoyes headed by Rattray confronted the rebels including Peer Ali. There ensued a short fight between them but the rebels could not stand before the bayonets of the disciplined Sikh soldiers and the mob (unorganised rebels) dispersed with heavy casualties.²⁷ This occurrence had a great impact on the authorities of Patna. The officials were terrified on account of the open challenge of Peer Ali, the book seller. They felt insafe and insecure on account of this occurrence.

The party of Sikh soldiers had been sent by Tayler who came to know about the occurrence at 8 P.M. through Lewis. Thereupon Tayler directed him and captain Rattray to proceed immediately with hundred Sikh Sepoyes. He himself went to Major Nation's mess and some neighbouring houses to inform the volunteers and sent messengers in the neighbourhood for asking the residents to come to house with



their family members for seeking shelter.²⁸ Soon thereafter all the English people with their families including the Judge and Mrs. Garret, assembled in his house. Fear gripped them. So guards were posted at strategic points in the town and necessary precautions were taken to prevent any surprise action of the rebels. At about 10 P.M. Anderson, an assistant in the opium Department, galloped up to Tayler and with a sword drawn in his hand exclaimed thus in excitement-" The city is up- the Sikhs have retired, and Dr. Lyell is shot dead."

At this stage being unable to judge the exact nature and strength of the insurgents under Peer Ali; Tayler directed General Loyd, commanding Dinapur Regiments to send a contingent of about fifty European soldiers. But before this party arrived news came to Tayler that the crisis had passed off. It so happened that as soon as the Sikh soldiers arrived on the same the insurgents dispersed. Hence the English soldiers returned. Many of these inhabitants who had come with family to seek shelter at Tayler's house also went back.²⁹

In this clash which occurred on July 3, 1857, a wounded rebel named Imamuddin was captured and brought to Tayler's house. On the next day (4 July, 1857) when he was in a position to speak something, Tayler went to interrogate him. On that occasion he made several disclosures. In course of his interrogation by the Commissioner (W. Tayler), Imamuddin, having received assurances of pardon and feeling grateful for the care and treatment of his wounds gave out that he had



been engaged and paid by Peer Ali Khan. He along with others was receiving regular payments for the last three months. He also disclosed that they had been asked to remain prepared to fight for their "deen" (religion) and the "Podsha" (king) of Delhi.³⁰ He even disclosed the news of several of his associates and gave out other useful information to Tayler. He further gave out that the Danapur Sepoys were also in league with the rebels.

From the statement of Imamuddin, it is clear that a few months back the outbreak had been planned and men were engaged on regular payment.

Communications were kept up with the obvious purpose of organising a general revolt against the English.³¹ Thus for sometime in the past "a conspiracy was brewing in Patna under the leadership of Peer Ali Khan the leading man of Lucknow."³² Finding these disclosures of Imamuddin, Diwan Maula Baksha, "the faithful and zealous old officer"³³ surrounded and searched the house of the rebel-chief, and obtained possession of arms and letters relating to the conspiracy.³⁴ It was an unexpected search. On the basis of these letters a thorough search was made on 4 and 5 July for the ring leaders of the revolt. Consequently, thirty one of them were arrested. Chief among these arrested persons were Peer Ali and Sheikh Ghasita, who was a confidant of Luft Ali Khan, the richest banker of Patna.

It was a matter of great regret that these arrested



persons were not sent to an ordinary court of law, but produced before a commission. This commission consisted of Tayler and Lewis, Magistrate and the court of Commission of Patna on the charge of rebellion and riot with murder. The artificial trial took place on July 7, 1857. Tayler admitted that the " niceties of cross examination and punctilious of judicial ceremony" were not permitted.³⁵

Among the arrested persons, the Commission found the fourteen guilty. So they were ordered to be hanged.³⁶ of these fourteen, twelve (Ghulam Abbas, Juman, Undhu, Haji Jan, Ramzan, Peer Baksh, Peer Ali Khan, Wahid Ali, Ghulam Ali, Muhammad Akher, Asghar Ali and Nand Lal) were hanged on the same day (July 7, 1857) between 1 and 2 P.M. The hanging was accomplished within three hours after the judgment was announced.³⁷ Wazid Ali shared the same fate.³⁸ The remaining two persons named Peer Ali Khan and Ghasita were hanged on July 8 and 9, 1857, respectively.

Unfortunately there was no immediate reaction to this barbarious act of the British.³⁹ The Muslims of Patna failed to live up to its militant profession and presented a pictures of disarray and paralysis. After July 9, deceptive calm haunted the city. As a matter of fact, the hostile, residents of the city became demoralised and nervous. It appeared that Peer Ali had no personal following and was totally dependent on the rich men of Avadh.

Soon after death of the rebel-chief, six more persons were arrested. Of these three were awarded capital punishment



two transportation, and one was sentenced to fourteen years imprisonment.⁴⁰ However, the names of these persons are not available.

It is note worthy that punishment awarded to the rebel chief and his supporters was not justified. The trial of the rebel chief was done in haste. He never dreamed this might happen so soon. Samuells, Tayler's immediate successor suspected that the sentences were passed on insufficient evidence and the papers were referred to the Mizamat Adalat. The judges confined their enquiry to cases of imprisonment and their finding was against Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna.⁴¹ Besides, Samuells, the Governor-General recorded in his minute of the 4th March, 1859, " I believe that in the course of Mr. Tayler's proceedings men were condemned and executed upon minsufficient evidence".⁴² But colonel Malleson applanded Tayler as the Saviour of Patna and condemned the superior authorities who failed to see eye to eye with the Commissioner.⁴³

By all accounts it seemed that Peer Ali of Lucknow was mainly responsible for the rising (July 3, 1857) while the British officials recorded that on July 3, a riot took place at Patna under the leadership of Peer Ali. On the other hand, it was a great rebellion. The primemover of this revolt was Peer Ali who failed in his attempt. If he succeeded in his attempt on July 3, he might have been a great rebellion and the Britishers had to face a good deal of difficulty in arresting him. The incident of the early July was not described as a riot.



As a matter of fact, for some months the rebel-chief and Sheikh Ghasita had been trying to engage paid agents and keep them ready to fight for their religion and the Nawab of Avadh. This, however, required a large amount of money. With this end in view the rebel chief was assisted by a great banker named Luft Ali Khan.

In character, appearance, and manners, Peer Ali was described by the Commissioner Tayler, as a "brutol but brave fanatic". His correspondence proved him to have been in communication with Masihuzzaman of Kanpur ever since the annexation of Avadh, and showed that a secret conspiracy had existed for sometime in Patna. His correspondence carried on under instructions from the North-West for some great ulterior purpose.⁴⁴ From the study of his correspondence with men at Lucknow appeared that the Patna outbreak was connected with the direction of Avadh.^{44(A)} But the modern researchers of Indian History described the action of Peer Ali as an act of bravery and courage.

Peer Ali, who had shot Dr. Lyell was temporarily reprieved by the Commissioner, in the hope of obtaining additional information from him, but he was defiant to the last. In fact, Tayler wanted to luse him. But the rebel chief refused to be lused. Besides, he did not succumb to the pressure tactics of the Commissioner. So at last when nothing could be elicited from him, he was also hanged.^{44(B)}

The rebel chief was undoubtedly the leader of disaffected person at Patna.



In a letter found at his house the following sentence occurred, "Some respectable persons in the city are in prison, and the subjects are all weary and disgusted with the tyranny and oppression exercised by government, whom they all curse." when brought before the Commissioner of Patna, he was asked whether he had any information to give that might induce the government to spare his life". with dignified composure, such as our own people did not always maintain under exciting circumstances, he confronted his question and replied, "There are some cases in which it is good to save life- others in which it is better to lose it". He further denounced the oppression of the Commissioner and said, " you may hang me, or such as me every day, but thousands will rise in my place, and your object will never be gained."⁴⁵ The letters found in Peer Ali's house disclosed an organised Muslim conspiracy to re-establish Muslim supremacy and overthrow the British government. In this way these letters were of great significance.^{45A}

It is a matter of great surprise that after the suppression of the revolt of July, 3, 1857, a large number of inhabitants thanked Tayler and expressed their feelings of loyalty to the British authorities.⁴⁶ Above all, there was no mourning for the cruel and untimely death of Peer Ali. As a matter of fact, he had no mass following. Unlikely, he was not popular among the influential men of the city. So he could not win good will and affection of the inhabitants of the local people. After all, it was his courage which compelled



him to revolt. Consequently, he had to embrace death unsought, unsung and unexpectedly.

It is to be noted that Waris Ali, the police Jamadar and Peer Ali, the rebel chief, at the time of their execution, requested the money they had about them to be given to a Fakir, a request which was not complied with.⁴⁷

Peer Ali, the rebel-chief died more than a hundred years ago but his presence is still felt. His death inspires us towards a better goal as yet. However, he lived for the country and died for the country. So he is regarded as a great patriot and the first rank martyr of Bihar. We salute his valour, courage and determination once for all.

FOOT NOTES ARE ONLY:

- 1) Sen, S.N. : Eighteen-Fifty Seven, p.251.
- 2) Rizvi, S.A.A. Freedom Struggle in Uttar-Pradesh, Volume I, p.46.
- 3) Ibid, p.359.
- 4) Sen, Op.cit, p.250.
- 5) This pamphlet had been extensively circulated in about Lucknow in a large number, and it was published in Urdu and meant for Muslims only.

Probably this pamphlet was not unknown in Delhi.

The Riassalah Jihad's sale centre was book seller's stalls and was supported to have been written by one Maulvi Mohammad Ismail who was also a Wahabi. This was published from Kanpur. This was inordinately violent in language and was vehement exhorting to all true Muslims to take up arms and do battle for their faith. This says "you are always striving by prayer and penance and burden some ceremonies to wipe off your sins and arrive at Heaven at last, "Why not scale it at once by dying in Battle with the Infidel ? You will have external happiness in the life to come and success and pleasure in the present. Throughout Hindustan, let there be no sound but Allah." "(Razvi, S.A.A., op.cit. pp.301-302).

- 6) Avadh was an old subah and a new kingdom. The ruling dynasty of this estate was of Persian extraction. The rulers were the followers of the Shia-faith. The founder of this dynasty was a noble of the Mughal court. The last ruler of this kingdom was Wajid Ali Shah who came to the throne in 1847.



During his tenure Avadh went from bad to worse and became famous for for corruption and misrule (Sen, S.N., Op.cit.pp.172-173)

- 7) Sen, Op.cit. p.77
- 8) The Hindoo Patriot, August 24, 1857, pp.267-268.
- 9) Rizvi, op.cit, Vol. I.p.103.
- 10) Parliamentary papers; First Narrative furnished by the Government of Bengal, of events which occurred in the Lower Provinces, connected with the revolt of the native army of this presidency, dated August 15, 1857, forwarded by the Governor-General of India in council to the court of Directors of the East India Company. Port William, August 22, 1857, (4 Public), Further papers relative to the Mutinies in the East India, Para-41, The National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- 11) Montpomery Martin, R, " The Indian Empire Vol. II, p.113.
- 12) Foreign Department, Persian letters received, No.213, dated 26 th March, 1856, The National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- 13) Rizvi, op.cit, p.116.
- 14) Sir Halliday, F.J., Lieutenant-Governor, his minutes of the 30th September, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- 15) Sen, op.cit., p.245.
- 16) Datta, K.K. Biography of Kunwar Singh, p.78.



- 17) Maulvi Mehdee was the Principal Patrol Daroga of the Twon.
He was Wahabi. He was arrested at Patna on the 19th June, 1857, by Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna because he was suspected that he had collusion with the disaffected persons. When the ex-Nawab of Avadh passed through Patna, he had been frequently admitted to the Royal presence. (Letter from Tayler, W., the Commissioner of Patna to A.R. Young, Secretary Government of Bengal, dated 17th July, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- 18) Forest, A., History of Indian Mutiny, Vol. V. p.292.
- 19) Datta, op.cit, p.82.
- 20) Chattopadhyaya, H.P., The Sepoy Mutiny, 1857, p.56.
- 21) Parliamentary papers, Vol. 44, part II of 1857-58, No.C.2316, P.14, Enclosures, 33, The National Archives of India, New Delhi, Tayler, W., Veritas Victrix, p.63.
- 22) Ibid; Martin, R.M., The Indian Empire, Vol. 2, p. 389.
- 23) The Englishman and Military Chronicles, 15 July, 1857.
- 24) Parliamentary papers, Vol. 44, Part II of 1857-58, No.C.2316, P.14, Enclosure 33 in No.2.
- 25) Ibid.
- 26) Tayler, W. Veritas Victrix, p.64.
- 27) Parliamentary papers, Vol. 44, Part II of 1857-58, Paper No.2316 p. 14, Enclosures 33 in No.2.
- 28) Ibid, p.p.13-14.
- 29) Ibid, p.14.



- 30) Ibid.
- 31) Ibid, Enclosure 33 in No.2, P.15.
- 32) The Englishman and Military Chronicle, dated 15 July, 1857.
- 33) Sen, Op.Cit, P.245.
- 34) Ibid.
- 35) Letter from Tayler, W., Commissioner of Patna to A.R.Young, Secretary, Government of Bengal, May 25, 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- 36) Letter from Tayler, Commissioner of Patna, July, 7, 1857, Exhibited No.8, Political, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- 37) The Englishman and Military Chronicle, July 15, 1857, Parliamentary papers, Vol. 44, part II of 1857-58.
- 38) Tayler, W. Veritas Victrix, p.65.
- 39) Letter from Lewis, Magistrate of Patna to William Tayler, Commissioner of Patna, July 7, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- 40) Parliamentary papers, Vol.44, Part II, paper No.C.2316, p.15 enclosure 33 in No.2.
- 41) Sen, Opicit, p.250.
- 42) Parliamentary papers, East India, 1858, No.226, Appendix, pp.7-11.
- 43) Sen, Op.cit.p.251.
- 44) Parliamentary papers, August 22, 1857, No.4, Public, No.5.



44A) Rizvi, Opicit. p.360.

44B) Parliamentary papers, Vol. 44, Part I of 1857-58, paper No.363

Enclosure No.2295, p.4.

45)Kaye, A history of the Sepoy War, Vol. III, pp.85-86.

45(A) Rizvi, Opicit, para 10, p.359.

46) Parliamentary papers, Vol.44, part II of 1857-58,
paper No.3314, pp.88-89, Enclosure-214 in No.2.

47)Parliamentary papers, Narrative of events furnished by the
Government of Bengal dated 21, August 1857, No.95 public;
further papers, No.5,pp.10-11.



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Ph. D. THESIS



ALI KARIM OF
ZILA PATNA



THE ROLE OF ALI KARIM

It is wrong to say that the State of Bihar was less disturbed and played little part during the revolt of 1857-59. This view has been expressed by the European writers and scholars. But so far the reality is concerned, this opinion is not acceptable to Modern Indian Scholars. As a matter of fact, Bihar played a major and significant part in this armed struggle next only Uttar Pradesh. Particularly the central Bihar spear headed a violent movement in the Gangetic Valley. On account of its heroic struggle, the Central Bihar had been most seriously and universally affected.¹ It had become a focus of attention for the people of Bihar.

It is remarkable to note that before the revolt of Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur (on July 25, 1857), Ali Karim came into limelight for his hostile and aggressive attitude towards the Britishers and anti-British activity in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh "unlike Peer Ali Khan of Lucknow, the great and courageous Leader of the rebels, Ali Karim was the resident of Bihar."² He had an ancestral house and property in the district of Gaya which was not a sleepy town during the revolt of 1857-59. He had come out of high family of the Mohammadans. But he was neither connected with the royal family of Delhi like Waris Ali, the police Jamadar nor with the family of the Nawab of Lucknow.³ After all, he was a respectable and recognised man of his district. He was ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ one of the wealthiest men and one of the leading landlords of the district. In the beginning of the year of 1857, he shifted his residence from Gaya to Patna and



began to reside on the Patna-Gaya road about nine miles away from the proper town of Patna where he had a double storeyed building,⁴ because Patna was the centre of political activities. It was the headquarters of the political and religious leaders of the State.⁵

So far Ali Karim's personality was concerned, he was an educated and forward looking man. He was a suave and polished gentleman. He had love for his people. He had much influence over his raiyats. He commanded respect among the inhabitants of the district. Besides he had a close and co-operative relationship with the leading men of the district.⁶ He had a close friendship with Mode Narayan Singh, the Raja of the Tekari estate. He also worked to promote friendly relation with the Raja of Benaras. He also developed closeness with Maheshwar Bux singh , the Raja of Dumraon and Babu Kunwar singh of Jagdishpur. In order to win over the other Principl landholders of the central Bihar, he extended friendship with them because he wanted to overthrow and uproot the Britishers from Bihar. The main object of his life was the destruction of the English and the re-establishment of a Mohammadan dynasty in this state. With this end in view he wanted to sacrifice his life, property and every comfort of his life. Accordingly there was no peace in his brain. He was greatly pained to see the sorry.... state of affairs of the country. His firm conviction was that Muslims could no longer live with dignity and honour in India and that their life, liberty and even identity were in danger if the Britishers were allowed to rule over this country.



He felt that the government of the East India Company was responsible for the bad political and economic condition of the people of the state because the East India Company's government did not care and bother to look after the interest of the people rather liked to ignore it.

His plea was that the Muslims got nothing after battle of Plassey (1757). He also reminded muslims about tragic memories of the Battle of Plassey (1758) and Battle of Buxer (1764). At the same time he narrated that the injustice was meted out to them. There were many Mohammadan families which were formerly distinguished were reduced to poverty. On account of these factors a large number of the Muslims lost their faith in the administration of the Company Raj. So the situation of the State became explosive. As a matter of fact, he developed a contempt for the British Raj. He opined that the English were the messengers of evil. So it was better not to choose them to favour an evil force. With this end in view he made a plot for the murder of all the Europeans at Patna with the co-operation of some of the principal Mohammadans of the local people. ⁷

It was a fact that he did not want to launch a war against the East India Company's government for the pursuit of power and wealth. But he wanted to establish a ruler of his choice at Patna. In this way, his anti-British policy made him popular among the rebels of the State. ⁸ He also criticised those who displayed loyalty.



So far his conduct was concerned, Ali Karim, the rebel-chief of the district of Gaya, was not a model of desperate and determined fanatic like peer Ali. He was not a cruel hearted leader. He was not a disgruntled and disaffected Jagirdar. At the same time he was not the leader of the State level. He had limited influence over people outside of the district of Gaya; At the same time, he was not a defamed personality of the Muslim community. On the other hand, he was a man of clean image. As a matter of fact, few of his contemporaries enjoyed so much respect as Ali Karim enjoyed in Gaya. In spite of many virtues in his character, he was misunderstood and considered as a traitor, mischief-monger, and conspirator of the first grade by the British officials.¹⁰ It is remarkable to note that Ali Karim had no personal grudge against the East India Company Raj in India. But it was the feeling of patriotism which compelled him to be hostile and aggressive towards the Company Raj.

It is not out of place to note that when the news of the mutinous γ spirit which had happened at Barrackpur and Barhampur in the early months of 1857 reached him, he felt that the company Raj was about to expire.¹¹ The anti-British activities of people inspired and encouraged him to be ready for the cause of Liberation of India. But it was not easy to raise the banner of revolt against the mighty Britishers. He was fully aware and convinced that in the event of war against the Company's government he could not mobilise enough support in his favour. Above all, he realised that he was not a match to the might of the Britishers.



Considering the vast resources and powerful military strength of the British government and finding his people disorganised and comparatively less equipped, Ali Karim made up his mind to work secretly and silently rather openly and swiftly against the foreign rule. Thereafter he became much active in political life of the State. But Gaya was not a suitable place for getting his aim and mission in life. So he resolved to leave this place and marched to Patna after the month of February, 1857. Since then he began to reside at Patna in his own building. No wonder, Patna was not stranger to him. He found here many like minded people who were willing to co-operate him in launching jehad against the Company's government. In fact, some were waiting in Patna for a more favourable opportunity to burst into open flames.

The rebel-chief of Gaya was hailed at the headquarters of the Lower provinces by the Wahabies and some others leading men as a man of future. Besides the Wahabies, to groups of people at Patna were engaged separately against the company's government. One was the Lucknow group with Peer Ali Khan, Yusuf Ali, Imamuddin and others. This group had begun to work in Bihar since 1856. Another group consisted of Waris Ali and some others headed by Ali Karim. The latter group drew inspiration and help from Delhi. But efforts had already been made to effect a collaboration between these two groups. In one of his letters to Peer Ali Khan, Museeh-us-Zamun, the Lucknow editor and book-seller, had emphasized the need



of such combination and instructed the latter (Museeh-us-Zamun) to contact Ali Karim and others. ¹³

So far Ali Karim was concerned, he was willing to extend his whole-hearted support to the group headed and led by Peer Ali Khan. At last both these groups agreed to work unitedly for the sake of liberation of the country.

The rebels of Patna headed by Ali Karim and Peer Ali Khan were highly excited in learning the account of the terrible mutinies at Meerut and Delhi (May 10, 1857). On the other hand, the Britishers received these sad and sudden news at Patna with the feelings of anxiety and horror. ¹⁴ Thereafter Ali Karim organised secret meetings of the Muslims which were held at night both in mosques and private houses in such a way that it was quite impossible to capture him.

15. During these secret meetings plans were made to overthrow the Britishers at the earliest. At the same time it was resolved that Ali Karim was to be elected as a ruler of the province if the scheme had succeeded. ¹⁶ Soon thereafter his name became household-words in Patna-Politics. No wonder he was prepared to provide a strong, mature and stable leadership to the state in the hour of crisis. In his message to the people he said that it was better to curse a foreigner than his own countryman. He was fighting for a noble cause. He called upon to fight for their 'deen' and the emperor of Delhi.



According to Plan and plot Ali Karim and his group had won over the Native Infantry stationed at Dinapur by various inducements such as distribution of money, etc. The three regiments of Sepoys of Dinapur were prepared to mutiny on June, 7, 1857. Sepoys from Dinapur which was at the distance of 8 miles from Patna, informed the Sepoys of Patna that they were about to rise and come down upon Patna and directed the ¹⁷ Majeeds to seize the Treasury and meet them. ¹⁸ So the Dinapur regiments were in a state of excitement. But unfortunately the letter addressed by the sepoy of Dinapur was seized by the government. The bearer of this letter was immediately punished, while the informers were liberally rewarded. So the mutiny did not take place. ¹⁹

This news shocked Ali Karim and his followers to a great extent. As a matter of fact, the police were only protectors of the Britishers at Patna. Had such an attack taken place, the massacre of every Christian would have been inevitable. But the catastrophe was avoided. The misdelivery of the letter prevented the deadly purpose from beginning carried out.

The discovery of the news made Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna Division, suspicious of an intrigue in the city. He was in horror to learn it. He also came to know from several sources that there had been secret meetings, correspondence, collection and distribution of money and other unmistakable signs of combination



and plotting.²⁰ In this way he came to know that ~~xxxx~~ Patna was not safe, rather it was in a great danger on account of Ali Karim's political activity.²¹

It is noteworthy that after June 7, 1857 misfortune began to play trick with the life of the rebel-chief of Gaya. Ever since he was in an embarrassing position and mentally he was upset. He began to feel that he would not succeed in his effort. On June 19, 1857 he suddenly learnt the said news of arrest of Shah Muhammad Hussain, Ahmadulla and Waizul Haq, the three prominent wahabi leaders who commanded tremendous influence over the Muslim masses of Patna. But it was irony that their detention did not provoke the outbreak. At the same time having encouraged by his tyrannical act, Tayler arrested Maulvi Mehdi, the Patrolling magistrate of the City, who was suspected of connivance with the disaffected people, particularly Ali Karim.²² Immediately afterwards, the commissioner issued a proclamation informing the inhabitants that if they did not deliver up their arms within twenty-four hours, they would be prosecuted. By another proclamation he asked the people not to come out of their houses after nine at night.

It is noteworthy that these measures taken by the Commissioner had disheartened the rebel chief and his men. The sudden imprisonment of the three wahabi leaders effectually prevented their devoted followers and well-wishers from joining the outbreak organised by him (Ali Karim). The seizure of arms had deprived the disaffected



men generally of the means of fighting and night meetings of the conspirators estopped. No wonder, many of the turbulent and disaffected men had fled from the city. The stoppage of communication with Dinapur had prevented concerned with the Regiments.²³ As a matter of fact these measures had a demoralising effect on the political activity of the Gaya-chief. These led to the complete frustration of his scheme. On account of these measures his whole planning appeared to be both premature and ill-concerted.

But soon afterwards an unlucky incident took place at Muzaffarpur in North Bihar. At dawn on the morning of the 23rd June, 1857, Richardson, the Magistrate of Tirhut all of a sudden, under the most suspicious circumstances. A number of letters were found in Waris Ali's possession from which it appeared that an influential person named Ali Karim of Gaya was also involved in the disturbances. As a matter of fact all these letters were written by the Gaya-chief. He used to write letters in order to overthrow the firangi-raj. The commissioner of Patna informed A.R. Young the Secretary to the Government of Bengal on August 22, 1857 that he was convinced of a proof of the existence of extensive and deadly plot made by Ali Karim and Peer Ali Khan. The conspiracies of the two men had been largely shared by the residents of Bihar. He was convinced that Ali Karim was a seditious person and had been prepared the ground for an outbreak.^(23A)



In one of his letters to his confederate Ali Karim talked of a large commercial enterprise (Tijarat) which he had set up. In another letter he wrote that he wanted to free the country from the robbers. In fact these letter were written in view of rebelling against the company Raj. So the government felt it necessary to arrest him, the arch-enemy of the Britishers, at the earliest. With this end in view Taylerat once despatched Lewis, the magistrate of Patna and Maula Buksh, the native deputy Magistrate of Patna with ten mounted troops and a party of fifty Sikh cavalry to arrest the rebel-chief (Ali Karim).

Lewis failed in his mission because he was, however, advised by the Magistrate's Nazir, who was the only active who was aware of the proposed expedition, not to carry with him a large party as that would scare away the victim (Ali Karim). Hence he proceeded alone with that officer. On the other hand the same officer (the Nazir) had earlier warned Ali Karim of the Magistrate's approach. So when Lewis reached the house of Ali Karim at Patna and found that the rebel chief had just started on an elephant with two or three armed attendants.²⁴ It was a great grave matter to him and a threat on his life. When he found that no one came to his aid in an hour of peril, he decided to escape at once.

On the other hand, Lewis was also greatly disturbed. He felt that had he taken the troops with him, he would have



certainly caught the Gaya Chief. But unluckily, he listened to advice, who strongly urged him not to let the troops accompany them. Lewis, who was eager and excited in the pursuit, failed in his attempt. When he came in sight of Ali Karim, the latter turned off the road and crossed the fields, the ekka of Lewis could not move swiftly and failed to follow the rebel-chief of Gaya. After all the magistrate continued the pursuit on foot, but without success. The villagers not only gave him no assistance, but actually removed a..... that had secured and otherwise thwarted him. Meanwhile Ali Karim disappeared into the thick jungle to the utter dismay of Lewis.²⁵ The magistrate returned the following day (June 24, 1857) worried and disheartened.

After the arrest of Waris Ali,²⁶ who was his staunch supporter and all in all in his future planning, the rebel-chief of Gaya became defensive in his approach to the Britishers because he was a broken man. He was not in a position to engineer much violence. At the same time he was not in a position to face the challenge of the company's government. Soon thereafter he began to realise that his life was not safe rather clearly in danger. Under the circumstances he was visibly nervous.

Some days after 24th of June, 1857, Ali Karim had come back to Patna, a stunned city, in disguise. He stayed in the town for a few days in a strange manner.²⁷ He tried his best to



seek support from the people. But he failed in his attempt this time. On account of constant arrest and increasing use of coercive method, the city was kept quiet and the inhabitants were overawed. So no one came forward to turn the Ganges water red of course, his hopes were suddenly believed. It meant that he had lost his charisma and he was not in a position to intimidate and threaten the Britishers. Soon thereafter he felt that he was indulged in a dangerous game. Meanwhile he got the urgent message that he was going to be arrested. Hence he immediately made his sudden flight from Patna. Before his flight from the town, the magistrate informed the Vazir that Ali Karim was in the town and ordered him to be ready for his early arrest.²⁸ But the vazir disobeyed his order and informed the Gaya chief for his immediate arrest. So the magistrate failed in his effort to arrest him (Ali Karim). Thereafter, Lewis, the Magistrate, came to believe that he had been betrayed again by the Vazir.²⁹ As a matter of fact, the Gaya-chief's life was saved twice by this Vazir putting his life into danger.

In the first week of July, 1857, the authorities were more alert and cautious. They were in search of Ali Karim vigorously. In course of search, they came to know that Hidayat Ali Khan's one man had been in league with Ali Karim and he had received a large sum of money from the rebel-chief. He had distributed the amount among his comrades.³⁰ The man was seized and the house of Ali Karim was searched in Patna. But nothing was



discovered in it. After all, this man was considered a traitor and was hanged. His comrades were imprisoned.³¹

IN THE FIRST

It is noteworthy that Ali Karim's house at Patna was razed to the ground. His property was confiscated and a reward of Rupees 2,000/- was offered for his arrest by the company's government in the month of early July, 1857. But he evaded arrest and remained at large despite of great effort of the government. Soon thereafter this amount was raised to Rupees 5,000/- for his head.³²

Finding him unsafe in Patna, Ali Karim resolved to return to Gaya. But this town was not in a mood to greet him and protect him from his enemies. So, he made up his mind to leave Bihar once for all with sad heart and tears in his eyes. At the time of departure he remembered that home was the sweetest place on the earth. He almost ended his glorious career of a politician. He moved to Gorakhpur in a mysterious way.³³

In Uttar Pradesh Ali Karim was a fallen hero. He had always been in one trouble or the other. After some time it appeared that his fate had been sealed for all time to come.³⁴ But the rebel-chief was the eternal optimist. In order to uproot the Company Raj in Gorakhpur he organised the rebels of Awadh.³⁵



His presence inspired the rebels in their avowed design of harassing the authorities. Unfortunately he had to face the Gorkha troops here and there. He fought faced a sudden attack of the British army under Colonel Rowcraft of Sohanpur, about 5 miles south-east of Mughauly in the Gorakhpur district on the morning of 26 December, 1857.

Ali Karim and his party had been defeated. He had to flee from this part of Gorakhpur. It was rumoured that Ali Karim had been killed. But it was not certain.³⁶ But it was sure that he died unknown and unwept. However, his flight from Bihar was considered as political funeral.

In concluding his role in the freedom struggle of India, we can say that if Ali Karim was not a patriot or a nationalist, he would have no problem. But on account of liberty of the motherland he had to give up a life of comfort and luxury. He wandered over districts far and near. He crossed mountains, hills and rivers and faced hardship.

As a matter of fact Ali Karim was a pioneer in the freedom struggle and fore runner of Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur, Amar Singh, Arjun Singh of Pirahat, Sahi brothers of Palamau when they were reluctant to raise the banner of revolt. No wonder, he inspired them by his act of courage and bravery. It is noteworthy that it was he who first tried his best to win over the sepoys of



Dinapur for the sake of Liberation of India when Kunwar Singh and his colleagues did not think to do so. So the Britishers called Ali Karim as the captain of the rebels of Bihar.³⁷

Foot Notes are here:-

- (1) Buckland, C.B., Bengal under the Lieutent-Governors, Vol.I, page-65.
- (2) Ali Karim was a resident of village Dumri, His one estate was at Mukdampur and Chauk Pahar in Pargana Dumri in the district of Patna . Besides, he had fractional shares in the estates in Pargana Manner in the same district. In addition to these, he had two estates in paragana Palich, one estate in pargana Azimabad. The total value of his estate was Rs.92,261. (Judicial Department, August 25, 1857, p.363. Bihar state Archives, Patna.
- (3) Tayler, W. The Patna Crisis, p.71.
- (4) Ibid, p.57.
- (5) It is not out of place to mention that Gaya was 60 miles away from Patna. The district headquarters of Zila Bihar (Gaya) was full of rebels and anti-Britishmen. After all, it has no capacity to overthrow and uproot the Britishers. On the other hand, Patna was favour for its revolutionary spirit since a pretty long time. It was an ancient city possessing the capacity to destroy the company Raj. Mir Kasim had made for the brutal ~~xx~~ slaughter of



of 200 Europeans in 1763. In 1857 the population of the city was about 1,00,000 souls, of whom about one fourth were Mohammedans. Little wonder, for some years past, the city had been considered as a pilgrimage for the plotters and rebels. In 1816, a dangerous plot was detected in which many Mohammedans of Patna and the neighbouring districts were concerned and in which attempts had been made to tamper with the sepoys.

That the conspiracy of 1846 was-

Patna was also famous for the conspiracy of 1846. Since 1846 every Moharram had been the signal for alarm among the Christian residents of Patna and when the revolt took place in 1857 there was no one in the province whose apprehensions were not principally directed to this city as the centre and focus of disloyalty. William Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna wrote that Patna was a treacherous and disaffected city and headquarters of the turbulent districts and a disorganised province. It was said that if Patna fell, every other district would be involved in ruin. (Tayler, O.P.Cit, pp.19-43).

(6) Letter from Tayler, W. Commissioner of Revenue for the of Patna to A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Calcutta, August 22, 1857. Home publishing No. 8 to 22 January, 1858, National Archives, New Delhi.

(7) Tayler, o.p.-cit. p. 56



- (8) Ibid, p.65
- (9) Kumar, N.District Gazetteers, Patna, p.55
- (10) Tayler, op.cit,p.23.
- (11) Ibid, p.34
- (12) Datta, K.K.-Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh,p.75.
- (13) Ibid, p.82
- (14) Tayler, o.p.-cit, p.25.
- (15) Ibid, p. 35.
- (16) Dutta, op.cit, p.83.
- (17) Nujeebs Mean Local police Battalion.
- (18) Tayler, op.cit,p.30.
- (19) The Nujeebs-Stationed at Patna were on the guard of Treasury and the Commissioner's house. If they turned against the authorities at this critical juncture, their destruction was inevitable. Tayler, op.cit,p.30.
- (20) Chattopadhyaya, H.P., The Sepoy Mutiny, p.166.
- (21) Tayler, veritas victrix,pp.54-55.
- (22) Ibid, pp.59-61.
- (23) Tayler, The Patna Crisis,p.72.
- (23)(A)Letter from W.Tayler, Commissioner of Revenue for the Division of Patna to A.R.Young, Secretary to the government of Bengal, Calcutta. Home publishing p.156, National Archives of India, New Delhi).
- (24) Ibid,pp.50-5
- (25) Tayler, Veritas Victrix.



(26) Waris Ali was a police Jemadar at Muzaffarpur in the district of Tirhut. He was in the service for many years before his arrest in June, 1857. He was a well-known personality in the district. He was of a noble birth and connected with the royal family of Delhi. He possessed of considerable property and was prepared to resign from the government post in order to engage himself in the Commercial Enterprise organised by Ali Karim. It is a fact that he (Waris Ali) did not give the slightest information either in regard to the collection of arms, the employment of suspected men and the distribution of money. He was ready to devote both property and life to the service of Ali Karim, the defiant soul of Gaya. On the other hand, he liked to be hated by the commissioner and other British officials. He was executed on the 6th of July, 1857. (Minute by the Lt. Governor of Bengal on the Mutinies, p.5.

(27) Kumar, op.cit. p.55

(28) The Nazir was a Mohammanadan. He was in league with Ali Karim.

He did not want to arrest the Gaya-chief at any cost. So he complicated the matter and allowed the rebel-chief to flee.

On account of it, he was considered a traitor and disloyal person. He was put into confinement and kept for trial. Later on he (Nazir) was acquitted by the Judge. (Tayler, op.cit, p.59).

(29) Tayler, op.cit, p.59.

(30) Ibid, p.63.

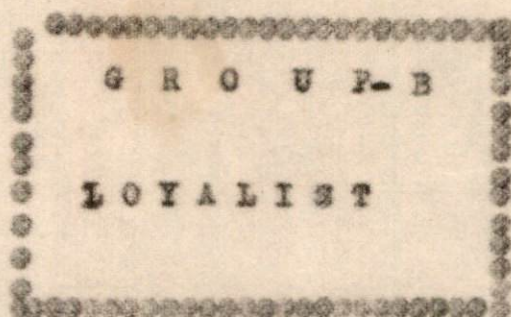
(31) Ibid, p.64.



- (32) Ibid, p.59
- (33) Datta; K.K., Unrest Against British Rule, p.42.
- (34) Rizvi, S.A.A., Freedom Struggle in U.P., Vol. IV, p.299.
- (35) Ibid, p.308.
- (36) Letter from the Secretary to the government of Bengal to the Commissioner of Patna, dated 28 December, 1857, Home publications, 15 January, 1858, No.36, p.93. The National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (37) Tayler, o.p. cit, p.65.



Ph. D. THESIS





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RAJA MAHESHWAR BUX SINGH
O F
DUMROAN



"THE ROBE OF MAHESHWAR BUX SINGH OF DUMRAON DURING 1857-59"

Maheshwar Bux Singh, the Raja of Dumraon, was a great and leading personality during the revolt of 1857-59 in Central Bihar. But he was an unfortunate chieftain of the Shahabad district because he was an controversial spinious of historians and research-scholars are varied about his robe and conduct during India's first war of Independence. The Raja's critics have formed an opinion that Maheshwar Bux Singh's robe was not inspiring, encouraging and significant in this upheaval. He was not a man of an independent nature. On the other hand, he was a submissive one and always tried hard to enjoy patronage and favour of the British officials. (1) In reality, he was a great supporter of the authoritarian rule in Bihar. He had been happy in the company of the Britishers. So he had always been considered a loyal and faithful subject of the slave India.² As a matter of fact, he was not a lover of Liberalism a great patriot at all. However, he preferred disgrace rather than to be honoured. He did not command respect amongst his warlike people. His qualities never endeared him in his Raj.

The Dumraon chief was a great loyalist by birth and blood. In the early days of the British rule in India, the forefathers of the Raja fought under the banner of the East India Company and they took a prominent part in all the great battle which finally established the sovereignty of England in India. It is remarkable to note that his great grand father fought under Major Hector Munro against



Shuja-ud-daula, the Nawab Vazir of Avadh, at the famous battle of Buxar in October, 1764.³ Thus his ancestors testified their loyalty, allegiance and devotion by every act that lay in their power to promote that object and feeling of loyalty which impressed them.⁴ In fact, the estate of Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh had always stood loyal to the British Throne and its members had always received honours from the British Government. The government of the East India Company acknowledged the humble services and devotions of the Raj and always looked favourably upon the Dumraon chiefs.⁵

In this background, the Dumraon Chief rendered a more imminent service by leading his clansmen after the English troops into action of Jagdishpur, against his kinsman Babu Kunwar Singh and by actively assisting in the defeat and dispersion of the rebels during 1857-59. It proved that he was always prompt to support the authorities in times of war and crisis.⁶ He was most anxious to do everything in his power to please the administration and earn its goodwill.

However, the rise of Rajput villages and of the influential zamindars made Shahabad a hot bed of armed politics during 1857-59.⁷ The military class (Rajputs) of the Dumraon estate also looked up to Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur who was the military chief of the family. It is shameful and surprisingly wonder that against the will¹ of the Rajput population, the Raja of Dumraon gave assistance to the



government in various ways. It was not the justified step of the Raja. As a matter of fact the Dumraon-chief was not a brave and courageous ruler. He was so weak that he never ventured himself to offend the insurgents.⁸ He had no courage to act against Babu Kunwar Singh, the rebel-chief of Bihar. Tragedy with him was that he possessed nothing to encourage and inspire his raiyat. With this end in view, he wanted to desist from adventurism.⁹ So he was not a spirited chieftain of Shahabad and talented ruler of his dynasty. In fact, there was dearth of soldierly character in him.¹⁰

It is remarkable to note that there were difference between Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur and Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon on many issues.¹¹ No effort was made from either side to bridge these differences while some issues could have been sorted out easily. Moreover, Kunwar Singh was a popular Leader of masses. He was the torch-bearer for the Bhojpuri man.¹² On the other hand, the Dumraon Chief was not a messian of his raiyats. He was not the hope of his people and pillar of strength to them in this crisis. In fact, he was not a legendary hero of the Shahabad district. He lacked vision, unable to do anything and step anything. When Kunwar Singh joined and assumed the Leadership of the armed rebellion in July, 1857, the Dumraon chief was forced in an embarrassing situation. Fear and terror gripped Maheshwar Bux Singh. For a few days he was surrounded by wild rumours. Under the circumstances, he remained in a delemma. Above all, it was a decisive moment of his



life. All in all he was lukewarm to participate in this armed agitation because the people of the district were necessarily much more under the influence of the rebel-chief (Babu Kunwar Singh) than of the Raja of Dumraon. Most of the people had relatives and friends in the rebel ranks.¹³ Under the circumstances, the Raja preferred neutrality for some period. But the period of his neutrality was short time. Later on he hardened his heart to take part in the revolt in favour of the British Raj against those who were eager and determined to drive out the English from this country.¹⁴

Early in 1857 the Dumraon-Chief did not extend his moral and material support to the government but he prevented many thousand people who were desirous to go on the warpath in the central region of Bihar.¹⁵ He succeeded in cutting edge of militancy of his warlike raiyats. On account of his negative robe the militants could not launch an effective war against the Company. At the same time he succeeded in creating confusion among the rebels. Above all, he never felt that the British rule in India was an imposition and curse.¹⁶ Therefore, the nationalists considered him as a fallen hero. He was viewed as a betrayal of the trust. However, if the Dumraon Raja had extended his co-operation and expressed goodwill for the rebels under Babu Kunwar Singh, the result of the revolt of 1857-59 would have been different and the armed rebellion would have been more bloody and protracted.

In this way, the critics have criticised and condemned



Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon for his insignificant role and passive participation in the armed agitation of 1857-59. On the other hand, the supporters and admirers of the Raja do not agree to accept the views and logic expressed by the opponents of the Dumraon-Chief. Moreover, they held the opinions that their allegations and condemnation carry no weight and their pleas and arguments are not logical and to the point. Their views regarding the Shahabad chief were biased and prejudiced. In support of the Raja they pleaded that Maheshwar Bux Singh, the Raja of Dumraon belonged to an ancient and respectable Raj family. He was an Ujjainia Rajput. His father was Jay Prakash Singh of Dumraon, Pargana Bhojpur and Zila Shahabad.¹⁷ He succeeded his father on 15th November 1844. In the same year, he was bestowed the title of 'Maharaja Bahadur' by the East India Company.¹⁸ He had a very large estate at his disposal. He was widely believed to be one of the wealthiest men in the district. He was one of the most influential Zamindars of the Central Bihar.¹⁹ Despite of many weaknesses with him, the Raja was a good-hearted chieftain and got reputation as a first-class and efficient administrator of his Raj.²⁰

It was further said that the Raja of Dumraon was well known for patience, tolerance and understanding. He had good and sweet relationship with the other Landed-Chiefs of Shahabad and Uttar-Pradesh. Muhammad Wazid Ali Shah, the Last Nawab of Avadh, was kind enough to grant ten bighas of land near Lucknow to the Raja of



Dumraon. This was offered to the Dumraon chief for the purpose of residence and garden. It was made over for ever free of rent.²¹ Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh was not a person of dubious repute.²² He was not the pastmaster in the art of tricks and manipulations. Besides, he believed in value-based politics. So he was restrictive in his effort. Above, all, the Raja was not a loyalist and supporter of the tyrannical rule in Bihar heartily.

When in July 1857 the district of Shahabad was in the grip of anarchy and chaos a hundred rumours bloomed and circulated each day in the district, Kunwar Singh was at the top of his power and the administration was in a critical position, the Dumraon chief maintained neutrality inspite of the repeated requests made by the British authorities.²³ It is a different matter that his neutrality was not admired but was suspected by them. Under the circumstances, he was called and reported as an opportunist and a time server.²⁴ During the whole of the period Kunwar Singh's stay in the district, the Raja of Dumraon absented himself from his estate. He sent back a number of sepoy on Leave. He failed to apprehend even a single rebel. If he would have tried his best to chase the insurgents, he could have apprehended them easily.²⁵

It testified that he was not co-operative to the authorities at this critical moment. In fact, he was not eager to work against his own people. Because he had soft corner for the freedom loving people, so he was not unkind and cruel to the rebels and mutineers.



He was not in a hurry to re-establish his character as a loyal and faithful Zamindar while the officials considered him as a sincere and faithful subject of the government. Under the circumstances, he was not serious and sincere in his effort. Therefore, he defied the orders of the officials. However, his conduct had not been considered uniformly meritorious.²⁶ At the same time, after July, 1857 the the Commissioner of Patna could not take him as a real and well-wisher of the government and held in the correspondence that " The Raja of Dumraon was an opportunist chieftain of Shahabad. He was in dilemma for a pretty long time. He wished to offend neither because he was not sure which side would prove victorious."²⁷ So Samuells, the Commissioner of Patna Division, came down heavily on the Raja and voiced his grave displeasure over the Dumraon-chief's conduct. But the adverse remark of the Commissioner did not disturb him.

After all, the Raja pretended to be loyal to the British government. He informed it that he was ready to sacrifice his life and property for the sake of the East India Company's rule in India against the will of his Bhojpuri men. He had always shown predilection for the Company.²⁸ In spite of heavy odds, he wanted to be a pillar of strength and inspiration to the company Raj. Nevertheless the Raja's words were not taken into confidence by the authorities because he did not arrest a proclaimed offender in his estate while his Jagir was full of the insurgents. No wonder, he had developed contempt and hatred for the foreign rule. That is why reverses of



of the rebels pained the Dumraon-chief greatly. He assisted the rebels secretly and sincerely and wished their success heartily. He had even an interview with Kunwar Singh, the rebel-chief of Bihar, and made strategy for winning the battle against the British Raj.²⁹ With this end in view he refused to work as a spy. Actually, he was not interested in espionage work against his own people. Therefore, he had never supplied either the Commissioner of the Patna Division or the Local officers with any information of the least value though he was repeatedly written on the subject, while as a Zamindar he was bound under the regulations to give the authorities early notice of the incursion of the armed men in his estate.³⁰ Besides, he entirely failed to retain his own men and villagers from plundering and destroying the property of Europeans. The aid he afforded to Major Byre's detachment was of the most niggardly character.³¹

However, the Dumraon Chief had informed the Commissioner of his Division that he was innocent and ignorant about the intentions of Kunwar Singh. He had no any previous knowledge of the Jagdishpur chief's wish to rebel. He was at loggerheads with the rebel-chief of Bihar.³² He was not interested in Kunwar Singh's political activities. After all when the latter revolted suddenly, he sent information immediately by means of a sowar and then sent another messenger by water. Unfortunately, both his men failed to deliver the message to the officials. The rebels under the Jagdishpur chief compelled his men to return. Thereafter, they began to make plan to plunder his property and kill him. Fear



gripped him and on account of it he hid himself first in one village and then in another. At the same time he directed his raiyat to keep quiet and support the government. He then entered at great length into the assistance which he rendered to the Magistrate and Collector previous to the outbreak.³³ In his clarification to the government, he admitted that he had utterly failed to know about the rebel-chief's strategy and planning with regard to seize Arrah in August, 1857.³⁴

But he was disbelieved by the British officials. His reply angered the Commissioner of the Patna Division much. Samuells, the Commissioner took a harsh view of the Raja's conduct. In his report to the higher authorities, he wrote about the Dumraon Chief that his conduct, however, if not actively hostile, undoubtedly amounted to gross dereliction of duty.³⁵ Under the circumstances, it was wrong to expect something from him. He never gave any assistance to the authorities from the beginning of the crisis. He was not a man of strong determination and conviction. It was better not to know about his conduct. With this end in view, the Commissioner expressed his opinion that Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon did not deserve any reward for his services during the previous year.³⁶ Soon, thereafter, the government of Bengal announced that no reward could be bestowed on the Raja.³⁷

In fact, this announcement of the British government did not pain the Raja. Not only that, he was not pleased with the news of victory of the British forces over the mutineers and,



rebels in the district of Shahabad. It is remarkable to note that whenever, he got a chance to serve the Company's forces, he did it with sad and heavy heart. Above all, he was reluctant to do needful in favour of the government. To be fair to the Raja it was said that Maheshwar Bux Singh was not a loyalist at heart.³⁸ If he was a loyalist by heart, he could have certainly made joint and united effort with the help of Raja Hit Narayan Singh of Tikari and Raja Jay Prakash Singh of Deomunga against Babu Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh immediately after the break out of the mutiny in July, 1857. But he never bothered for a united action against the rebel chief, while the chiefs of Tikari and Deo Munga were willing to work under his leadership. Thus it was wrong to say that the Raja of Dumraon was a great supporter and lover of the Britishers.

However, it is an admitted fact that the Dumraon Chief did not remain neutral for a pretty longtime. After August 1857, he was a completely changed man. He changed his attitude and behaviour when he came to know that the British government was in a stronger position, Babu Kunwar Singh was driven out of the district and the hope of victory of the rebels had proved illusory. Thereafter he came forward decidedly a loyal and zealous adherent of the government. Under the circumstances, he disliked to become a chief negotiator and he did not persuade the rebels to half the fight. On the other hand, he decided to humble them militarily and discredit them politically.



Thus he became a great champion for the cause of the Britishers.³⁹ No wonder, he also ordered his men to strengthen the hands of the government in order to curb the political and military menace.

As days began to pass on, the Raja started to win over the authorities by rendering good services. With this end in view he met all requisitions with promptitude and personally accompanied the troops in an expedition against the rebels, during the second fight to the finish. Thereupon his good and loyal behaviour was recognised. His help was considered valuable at that time (September, 1857) because Shahabad was in the grip of terror and shock. Not only this district but the entire Central region of Bihar was in a state of irritation and disquiet.⁴¹ Every Rajput was considered as militant in the district. Batches of the mutineers were freely moving in this region. Rebels of Palamau and Zila Bihar (Gaya) also made Shahabad their headquarters for launching a hide and seek war against the loyal Zamindars and Europeans. The officials of the district and outside also felt that without receiving the Raja's assistance and cooperation, it was quite impossible to restore normalcy in the entire Bhojpur region.

During the month of September, 1857, the Dumraon Chief displayed a prominent robe in favour of the company Raj. He raised a small body of men. He was twice present in the field during skirmishes in the neighbourhood of Dumraon and accompanied



over troops Jagdishpur.⁴² His action pleased the authorities. He succeeded in establishing his character as a loyal and faithful Zamindar. Besides, the two immediate victories over the rebels had undoubtedly salvaged some prestige for Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh. He began to justify the faith reimposed in him.

Thereafter the Dumraon-chief began to feel that it was the company Raj's duty to accord due respect to him and it was improper for them to negate his achievement.⁴³ When in October, 1857 the government demanded assistance from the Raja for suppression of the insurgents in the district, he did not hesitate and lent A. Ross, the Magistrate and Collector of Ghazipur, 100 footmen, 10 horsemen and three elephants for five months.⁴⁴ On account of the services afforded to the government, the Magistrate and Collector of Ghazipur expressed thanks and reported to the higher authorities that Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh was not an ordinary personality of Shahabad. He had enormous wealth at his disposal. He was not a suspected personality of Central Bihar and occupied a place of importance in the Lower Provinces. He had extended cooperation to him in every way within his power. He had ~~extended cooperation~~ taken risk of his life for re-establishing normalcy in this zone. He displayed courage and boldness in facing the challenges of the rebels. His employees also helped to guard over public officer. Besides, he had afforded the greatest assistance in procuring supplies whether for troops marching through the district of



Shahabad or for the army generally and his interests had been so far assimilated with those of the government. His employees had become objects of attack for the rebels. He had been maltreated by the followers of Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur. Under the circumstances, it was wrong to ignore him further. At last he recommended that the Raja of Dumraon had been awarded an honorary distinction or title.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, this recommendation of the official did not produce the desired result. In reply the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal informed the official that the government was pleased to cancel the remembrance of the Raja's previous shortcomings and re-instate him in good graces of government.⁴⁶ Thus luck did not smile on him this time. No wonder he failed to get any reward. Nevertheless, the Dumraon Chief succeeded in creating a favourable impression in the British camp.

It is a matter of great surprise that earlier B.A., Samuells, the Commissioner of Patna Division had made an adverse remark about the Dumraon Raja. Later on the same official admired and asserted that the Raja assisted the British forces with carriage, supplies and made close contact with the various civil and military officials officers in Shahabad during the last occupation of the district by the rebels.⁴⁷

A great challenge was offered to the Raja when Babu Kunwar Singh decided to return to Shahabad after being defeated in Azamgarh on 15 April, 1858. He received the instruction from the



officials that he had to guard the ghats where Babu Kunwar Singh was expected to cross the river. In response to this, the Raja sent 200 men to guard the Ballia ghats and promised to go there personally to fight Kunwar Singh if he came by that way. The Raja, however, did not actually go there.⁴⁸ Because Kunwar Singh's presence drew a tremendous popular support in favour of the mutineers. A large number of persons joined his party and the villagers seemed to be almost universally in his favour.⁴⁹ Besides the discontented chiefs and landlords of the district came forward to his (Babu Kunwar Singh's) help, at the same time the Raja had been beset with physical problems. So his physical absence did not mean that he had lost the confidence of the authorities. But his 200 Sepoys fled away without facing the insurgents under Kunwar Singh. They returned to Dumraon without giving any information to the officials.⁵⁰ Their flight from the ghat put the Raja in an awkward and enharassing position. The cowardice act of his men angered the officials much. But the Raja felt his helplessness in this regard. A close watch was kept on the attitude and conduct of the Dumraon chief.

After Babu Kunwar Singh's death, the command of his troops devolved upon his younger brother, Amar Singh,⁵¹ who adopted the guerilla tactics of harassing the British forces. Rebels under Amar Singh raided the countryside and punished the Zamindars who were loyalists. On 3 June, 1858 the rebels marched to Surjapura and



plundered the house of the Diwan of the Dumraon Raja.⁵² They remained moving in different batches in the villages near Dumraon. Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh had to face several raids mounted by the rebels under Amar Singh.

There was abnormal situation in the district after June, 1858. Life was not safe. Several thanas of Shahabad were in the grip of rebels. Money, the Magistrate of Shahabad, felt helpless to crush them and restore law and order in the district.⁵³ On the morning of 30 July, 1858, Amar Singh's party came into clash with the troops under colonel Walter in a village named Mahauli with some losses on their sides.⁵⁴ Luckily the Dumraon-chief was with the British troops in this encounter. Early in August, 1858, insurgents under Amar Singh again threatened Arrah, the headquarter of the district, colonel Walter, commanding troops at Arrah, at once left with his party to meet them. Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon and his savars came forward to help Colonel Walter this time again. On account of the joint effort a body of insurgents left the siege of the village, Sarneyaganj which was lying between Benchpur to Dumraon on 8 August, 1858. The Raja fought a heroic battle against them on this occasion.⁵⁵ Thereafter the Lieutenant-Governor was pleased with him for his sincere help and co-operation.

The Raja was always in a mood to earn the good-will of the alien ruler. When he lost an elephant during the revolt of 1857-59, he declined to receive compensation for the loss of an.



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elephant. So the government extended thanks for his courteous conduct. He was praised and thanked once again when the mutiny came to an end in 1859.

A true and real analyst concluded that Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh was a historical figure and he had malice to none. Obviously, he played a double role in the revolt. Before the month of September, 1857, he played a negative role. Thereafter he played a positive role because he did not want to sacrifice the future of his people. Above all, he was not a disillusioned chieftain.



Foot Notes are only:-

- (1) A Letter from Samuells, B.A., Commissioner of Patna Division to A.R.Young, the secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.2217, dated 23 December, 1858, Judicial Department, 13 January, 1859, No.49, P.189, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (2) Judicial Department, 20 June, 1859, p.644, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (3) Ghosh, L.N., The Modern History of the Indian Chiefs, p.438.
- (4) Tawarikh Ujjainiya, Vol. II.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Monthly Bundles, Letter from the Secretary, the Government of Bengal to W.Taylor, the Commissioner of Patna Division, Letter No.2627 dated 18 September, 1857, Vol. II, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (7) Bengal past and present, 1956.p.57.
- (8) Judicial Department, 13 January, 1856. p.47, para6, pp.187, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (9) Letter from Samuells, the Commissioner of the Patna Division to A.R.Young, the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.2217, dated 23 December, 1858, judicial Department, 13 January, 1859, No.49 p.189, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (10) Political Department, August, 1860, No.95, Bihar State Archives, Patna.



- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Letter from Samuells, E.A. Commissioner of Patna Division to A.R. Young, Secretary to the government of Bengal, No. 2217, 23 December, 1858, Judicial Department, 13 January, 1859, No. 40, p. 189, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) Bengal Past and Present, 1956, p. 56.
- (15) Home Publishing Cons, 18 September, 1857, No. 63, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (16) Letter from A. Ross, the Magistrate and Collector of Ghazipur to H.L. Tucker, Commissioner of 5th Division, Ghazipur, 14 October 1857, No. 409, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (17) Judicial Department, 20 January, 1859, p. 644, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (18) Political Department, August, 1860, No. 95, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (19) Letter from Wake, H.C., the officiating Magistrate of Shahabad to A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 19 February, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (20) Ghosh, L.N., op.cit, p. 439.
- (21) A forman of Wazid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Avadh, Hizee-1264 and the Sambat Year is 2030. This grant was made after second year of ascendancy of Wazid Ali Shah. The forman was in Persian.



- (22) Letter from Probyn, L.S., the Joint Magistrate of Ballia to J.H.Bux, the officiating Magistrate of Ghazipur, No.32, dated 15 September, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (23) Letter from Samuells, commissioner of Patna Division to A.R.Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.2217, 23 December 1858, Judicial Department, 13 January 1859, No.49 p.189, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (24) Letter from Young, A.R., Secretary to the Government of Bengal to Samuells, the Commissioner of Patna Division, No.350, dated 16 August 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (25) Parliamentary papers, vol.44, part 11 of 1857-58, p.27, paper no.79, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (26) Letter from Young, A.R., Secretary to the Government of Bengal to B.A.Samuells, Commissioner of Patna Division No.350, 16 August 1859, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (27) Bengal Past and Present, 1956, p.56.
- (28) Letter from A.Ross, Magistrate and Collector of Ghazipur to H.L. Tucker, Commissioner of 5th Division, Ghazipur no.409, Dated 14 October, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (29) Bengal past and present, 1956, p.56.
- (30) Letter from Samuells, Commissioner of Patna Division, to A.R.Young



Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.2217, 23 December,1858,
Judicial Department,13 January 1859, No.49 p.189, Bihar State Archives,
Patna.

(31)Bengal past and present,1956,p.57.

(32)Letter from A.Ross, the Magistrate and Collector of Ghazipur to
H.L.Tucker, Commissioner of the 5th Division, Ghazipur, No.409,
Dated 14 October,1857, Bihar State Archives,Patna.

(33)Parliamentary papers, vol.44, part 11 of 1857-58,p.27,paper
No.79. National Archives of India, New Delhi.

(34)Home publishing cons. 18 September,1857, No.63, National Archives
of India, New Delhi.

(35)Letter from Samuells, commissioner of Patna Division to A.R.Young
o.p.cit.

(36)Ibid.

(37)Letter from Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal to Samuells,
Commissioner of Patna Division,No.350, 26 August,1857 Bihar State
Archives,Patna.

(38)Ibid.

(39)Ibid.

(40)Letter from Browne,H.U.,Under Secretary,Government of Bengal to
E.A., Samuells, the Commissioner of Patna, Fort William,16 August
1859,Bihar State Archives,Patna.

(41)Letter from Forgusson,H.^D.H.,Commissioner of Patna Division to
A.R.Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal,No.70,18 June



- 1859, Fort William, judicial Department, Bihar State Archives, Patna
- (42) Letter from Samuells, Commissioner of Patna Division, to A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.2217, dated 23 December 1858, judicial Department, 13 January, 1859, No.49, p.189, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (43) Monthly Bundles, Letter from Young, A.R. Secretary to the Government of Bengal to Samuells, Commissioner of Patna-Division, Vol. II, No.2627, 18 September, 1857 Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (44) Letter from A. Ross, Magistrate and Collector of Ghazipur to H.L. Tucker, Commissioner of the 5th Division, Ghazipur No.409, dated 14 October, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (45) Ibid.
- (46) Letter from Young, A.R. Secretary to the government of Bengal to Samuells, Commissioner of Patna Division No.350, 16 August, 1859, Pol. Department, Fort William Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (47) Letter from Samuells, E.A., Commissioner of Patna Division to A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.2217 23 December, 1858, Para 11, judicial Department, Fort William, 13 January, 1859, p.190, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (48) Ibid, No.4058, dated 22 April, 1858.
- (49) Foreign Secret consultation, dated 28 May, 1858, No.59, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (50) Bengal Past and Present, 1956, p.56.



- (51) Foreign Secret Consultation, dated 28 May 1858. No.503, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (52) Letter from the Commissioner of Patna, to the secretary, the Government of Bengal, dated 7 June, 1858, Military Department Consultation No.431, Fort William dated 25 June 1858, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (53) Monthly Bundles, Letter from Young A.R. Secretary to the Commissioner, Patna Division, Vol. II, No.3233, 23 October, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (54) Letter from Broadhurst to the Commissioner of Circuit Patna dated 5 August, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (55) Monthly Bundles, Letter from Young A.R., Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Commissioner of Patna Division, No.3282, 26 August, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (56) Ibid, No.5032, 26 June, 1863.



THE ROLE OF SHAH KABIRUDDIN AHMAD OF
SASARAM



The revolt of 1857-59 had incited many chieftains of Bihar to try their chance for an increase of their power and position. So far Shah Kabiruddin Ahmad was concerned, he was not among those petty chieftains who wanted to strengthen themselves at the expense of the English Raj.¹ On the other hand, he wanted to strengthen the English at his own expense because he held the view that under the East India Company's rule, the country would progress and he would achieve greatness. With this end in view he liked to remain loyal and faithful to the government in critical hour. Consequently, the loyalists of the district of Shahabad got a good leader and supporter in Shah Kabiruddin Ahmad in the struggle of life and death for the East India Company.

Shah Kabiruddin Ahmad was a very influential and powerful Nawab of the Subdivision of Sasaram. His native village was Chunar in that district.² He had inherited a vast paternal property and he managed it properly and efficiently. He was a little educated Shah. He never involved in debt and his estate never came to be mortgaged.³ He possessed an attractive personality. He was a tall man of above 45, possessing a pointed nose and beautiful eyes, thin whiskers and mustache.⁴ Besides, he was active, wise, suave and manners, dignified in bearing, courteous in dealing and noble in appearance and conduct. He was at the same time courageous, daring and practical. He was undisputed leader of his area (Sasaram).



Inspite of Shah Ahmad's many virtues, he was a controversial person. He created many adversaries who were adamant to defame him. It is a fact that before the outbreak of the mutiny (1857) the Sasaram-chief was a staunch supporter of the British government and intimate friend of the Magistrate of Sahabad (H.W.Wake)⁵. So he was not considered a disgruntled chieftain of the district of Shahabad. The Sasaram chief held the view that under the rule of the East India Company was blessing for people of the land. No wonder, he felt that if he was a rebellion, his own village would be set on fire, his dwelling house would be razed to the ground. Consequently he would face hardship and trouble to give up a comfortable way of life and ultimately cost him his throne. With this end in view he decided to be a loyalist in this critical hour. Besides, he realised his fault and weakness and felt that he was not well-equipped to fight the mighty British power. Above all, he did not want to be a ruined man by rising in arms against the company Raj.⁶ With this end in view, he avoided a confrontation with the English while it was well-known that Ali Karim, Peer Ali, Hyder Ali Khan, the Nawab of Avadh and other Muslim leaders were determined to drive the English from India at all cost.

Accordingly the Sasaram-chief never changed his mind and refused to be a leader of the rebels of the district.⁷ So, the mutineers failed to obtain his support and assistance.



As a matter of fact, if he did not extend political, moral and military help to the Britishers in this upheaval, it would be difficult for the Company Raj to restore law and order in the district of Shahabad.

On account of Shah's loyalist attitude, he was assailed and condemned by his critics. He was dubbed as a leader of traitors. He was called as an avarice chieftain, a villain and a fallen hero. He was timid to the last degree. He worked as a spy for the alien government on account of his selfish end during the life and death struggle. He was also called as a profligate person by the Bhojpuri men. At the same time he was keeping a low profile. According to them (critics), he was not a political heavy weight as the Raja of Dehraon, Deo Munga Chiefs and others. Above all, he was not a lover of independence. He liked disgrace, dishonour and ~~xxx~~ slavery of the country. So he was considered as the most hated person of the Indian politics. In this way his critics left no stone unturned to malign his image in the eyes of people and made derogatory remarks about the Shah.

But the truth was far from these allegations and condemnations. The supporters and admirers of Shah Karimuddin were not prepared to accept the views expressed by his critics. To the contrary they held the view that the opponents of the



Sasaram chief were not fair to him (the Shah) rather they had adopted biased and prejudiced views regarding the rule and character of Kabiruddin during the revolt of 1857-59. According to them the Sasaram chief was not a short-sighted and petty-minded chieftain. As a matter of fact he was not a plotter and conspirator and disaffected landlord. He was not a traitor. If he extended support to the government during the crisis, it was not a matter of regret and shame because many powerful and influential chieftains of Patna Division including Maheshwar Bux Singh, the Maharaja of Dumraon, the Rani of Tekari, the chief of Deo Munga estate and others assisted and cooperated the authorities during the critical period without fear and hesitation. Besides, the Shah was a leader of Muslim population in his subdivision.⁸ From all accounts it appeared that the Shah had rewarding friendship with the English.

Before the outbreak of the mutiny of the Dinapur Sepoys (July 25, 1857), the Sasaram chief was in an embarrassing position because the British residents had begun to feel insecure in this district. The news of the revolt people of Kanpur, Meerut, Lucknow and other places began to reach the District, so people began to expect outbreak of the Indian troops at Dinapur in June.⁹ Information was also received at Arrah and other places that an uprising of both the Sepoys and Muhammedan population was likely to take place in the entire district and several influential men of



Patna and Chapra were involved in the conspiracy. The Sasaram chief was greatly pained to learn such news. He wanted to prevent panic and disturbances in his town and its neighbourhood at all costs. At the same time he prepared himself to face the threat and challenge offered by the insurgents.¹⁰

On the evening of July 25, 1857 a revolt of the Indian troops of Dinapur took place. On hearing it panic spread like wild fire throughout the district. The Shah of Sasaram learnt the news that mutineers had opened the gate of jails and set the prisoners free at Arrah. In addition to it they plundered the treasury.¹¹ No wonder they accepted the leadership of Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur who was a very influential and powerful Rajput Zamindar in that very district.¹² Soon thereafter the insurgents also tried to win over the Sikh soldiers and landed chiefs of the district including Shah Kabiruddin of Sasaram to their side. But their appeal went in vain. Besides the insurgent-leaders' appeal, Babu Kunwar Singh tried his best to influence the mind of the Shah against the British authority. But royal chief flatly refused to side with him. Thus the Rajput chief could not be able to inspire him to the contrary, the Shah called him a leader of misguided youths of Shahabad.

When the Sasaram-chief came to know that Dunbar, the English captain of the rescue party of four hundred,



defeated by the insurgents on July 30, 1857, this news gave him a rude shock.¹³ After all he had firm belief that ultimately the English succeed in defeating the rebel force, headed by Babu Kunwar Singh. So, the temporary set-backs would not last long. At the same time he openly declared that his object was to protect the British authority. With this end in view he resolved that under no circumstances, he would change his mind. In this way he liked to remain a loyal and humble raiyat and always prayed for the prosperity of the government.¹⁴

In the month of August, 1857 William Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna Division reported that he continued to receive assurances of friendship and fidelity to the British government from various landed-chiefs including Shah Kabiruddin of Sasaram. It is remarkable to note that whenever the government expressed any suspicion about his conduct, the Shah sent Tayler, the commissioner of Patna, his personal regard and conveyed his loyalty to the British government.¹⁵ He also informed and cautioned the Commissioner in June, 1857 that Babu Kunwar Singh was not a loyalist and friendly to the government. In this way the friendly relation between the authority and the Shah was durable and lasted for long. It was ~~th~~ true that the government never received an unfavourable reports about the intention and activities of the Shah.¹⁶

As a matter of fact, the Shah stood as a pillar of strength to the administration in Shahabad. He wanted to check rebellion with all cost. With this end in view he communicated



the Lieutenant-governor in August, 1857 that he was extremely sorry to see the prevailing situation in his district. In his letter he expressed his inability for want of legal authority to maintain law and order in the villages in the neighbourhood of Sasaram.¹⁷ In return the Lieutenant-Governor expressed his thanks to the Loyal-chief of Sasaram for his friendly and co-operative attitude towards the English. Soon thereafter he was considered as a pure hearted and peace headed chief of the district. He was praised for his liberal and soft views. In order to please him, the government of Bengal appointed him as an Assistant Magistrate in the district of Shahabad. He was vested with special powers.¹⁸

On the 4th September, 1857, the Sasaram chief received the letter from the Secretary to the government of India that the services rendered by this gentleman (The Shah) would be borne in mind by the Lieutenant-Governor.¹⁹ This news thrilled the royal chief to a great degree.

But a lasting time was ahead of the royal chief. In August, 1857 Babu Kunwar Singh lost his native village, thereafter he fled towards Rohtas in route to Sasaram in order to teach him (the Sasaram-chief) a task. But before the arrival of Babu Kunwar Singh at the subdivisional quarters, and another party of Dinapur mutineers about 2,000 in number, attacked and plundered Sasaram destroying all they could lay hands on (7th August, 1857). Shah Eabiruddin Ahmad fought a battle for six hours with them killing twenty and



wounding many more men. In Kabiruddin's party only two or three men were wounded. His party had also seized a few of rebels.²⁰ On the same day (August 7, 1857) the mutineers had robbed the mail and burnt some of the papers contained in it at Sasaram. The driver of the mail van was maltreated and the post office, dak bungalow and the Deputy Collector's house were burnt by the mutineers consisting of the two regiments of the Native Infantry. The telegraph line was also breached at several places in and around Sasaram. From there the mutineers proceeded in the direction of Mirzapur.²¹

About a week later (15 August, 1857) in view of plundering the Shah, Babu Kunwar Singh reached Sasaram but he also got no support from the local people, because Shah Kabiruddin who enjoyed a considerable hold over the people particularly Muhammadans in the neighbourhood was very great, kept the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood in good heart, and did his utmost to assist the government. The Shah's conduct on this occasion was very praiseworthy, and he had since been thanked and rewarded.²² In this way failing to receive the sympathy and support of the local people, Babu Kunwar Singh left Sasaram for ever. After his departure, the royal chief of Sasaram helped the government in restoring law and order in and around Sasaram. He also kept the British authorities regularly informed of the movements of the mutineers in that quarter.²³

The anti-nationalist role of the role of the



Sasaram chief of Sasaram greatly disturbed Amar Singh, the younger brother of Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur. A party of about 500 men under the leadership of Amar Singh went to Chunar and plundered the house village of Kabiruddin Ahmad on August 20, 1857.²⁴ On account of this plunder, the government announced a reward of Rs.1,000/- for the apprehension of Amar Singh; on hearing it the Shah heaved a sigh of relief. He earnestly requested W. Tayler that a small force may be sent to Sasaram at the earliest to restore law and order among his estate on the Grand Trunk Road and around Sasaram.²⁵ On his request the Commissioner of Patna Division requested captain Battary, then commanding the Sikh corps at Gaya, to send at least 150 men to Sasaram on the 24th August, 1857.

Since then Shah Kabiruddin of Sasaram had continued to make himself useful and prove his loyalty. He was rewarded with akhilat of 10,000 Rupees and a sanad under the seal and signature of the Governor-General.²⁶ After all, a complete feeling of security could hardly be expected to exist. This reward enhanced his position in his subdivision.

It was remarkable to note that after receiving the reward from the government he began to perform his duty in his best capacity.²⁷ This view was expressed by W.J. Marschel, officiating Magistrate of Shahabad. The Magistrate wrote the Commissioner of Patna Division that there was dearth of loyalist and faithful



Zamindars and landed chiefs in Shahabad on account of fear of Babu Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh. It was only Shah Kabiruddin who boldly defied the fatwa of the rebel chief and supported the government without caring for the consequences.²⁸

Amar Singh and his followers continued to infest Rohtas and its neighbourhood, and on one occasion a relative of his, with a party of insurgents and mutineers, crossed the Sone for the purpose of plunder. On account of it Shah Kabiruddin proposed to raise a body of men at Sasaram to act against them (the insurgents). In November, 1857 the government rejected the proposal of the Shah because in the middle of November, Amar left Rohtas and had taken refuge in Chainpur. Shahabad was becoming tranquillized.²⁹

The rumours of Babu Kunwar Singh's intention to return to Shahabad from Asangarh caused much anxiety to the English officers in Bihar. On the 30th March, 1858, A.R. Young Secretary to the Government of Bengal forwarded for the information of the Governor-General, the message from the commissioner of Patna. "There was great alarm both at Chapra and Arrah".³⁰ Because large numbers were prepared to join Babu Kunwar Singh and his force, the Commissioner of Patna division adopted strong measures against the apprehended return of the rebel chief in April, 1858. With this end in view 250 men were posted at Sasaram under the disposal of the Shah. There had been two companies of sepoy at Sasaram under Sergeant Nolan. The loyal chief was in close contact with the civil authorities. While the discontented



chiefs and landlords of the district of Shahabad came forward to Babu Kunwar Singh's help.³¹ In April, the Sasaram chief was very much active in support of the government.

It is remarkable to note that it was the Shah who succeeded in arresting Nishan Singh, one of the brave leaders of the insurgents of Bihar, who had been separated from the main body on the evening of 5 June, 1858.³²

In concluding his role during 1857-59 as the records show that Shah Kabiruddin of Sasaram was very well disposed towards the English and he held a friendly feeling towards them. At the same time it is clear that in his dealings with the insurgents he did not show any violent temper or ruthless cruelty.

He dealt with Babu Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh with shrewd diplomacy. As a matter of fact, he was not a man of violent character and revolting nature. On the other hand, he was a man of submissive nature.

Foot Notes are only

- (1) Dodd, George- The History of Indian Revolt of 1856-7-8; p. 388.
- (2) The village Chunar was near Sasaram in the district of Shahabad. This village was native place of Shah Kabiruddin (Chattopadhyay, H.P., The Sepoy Mutiny, 1857, p.115)
- (3) Chattopadhyay, H.P., The Sepoy Mutiny, 1857, p.113.
- (4) Letter from H.W.Wake, Magistrate of Shahabad to the Commissioner of Patna Division, Camp Jagdishpur, dated 12 January, 1858, Letter No.12, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (5) Chattopadhyaya, O.P.cit, p.113.
- (6) Letter from H.C.Wake, Magistrate of Shahabad to A.R. Young; Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated 19th of July, 1857, No.150, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (7) Chattopadhyaya, O.P.cit, p.113.
- (8) Buckland, C.E., Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors, Vol. I, P.74.
- (9) Halls, J.J.- Two months in Arrah in 1857, pp.9-10.
- (10) Letter from W.Taylor, Commissioner of Patna, to A.R.Young, the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated 14 June, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (11) Home Public Consultation dated 21 August, 1857, No.41, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- (12) Chattopadhyaya, O.P.Cit, p.113.
- (13) Parliamentary papers, vol.44, Part I of 1857-58, paper No.C-2294, p.23. Enclosure 38 in No.I Dinapur, dated 30 July, 1857.



- (14) Ibid.
- (15) Narrative Events, dated 15 August, 1857.
- (16) Chattopadhyaya, op.cit, p.124.
- (17) Letter from C. Beadon, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department; to A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.25, dated the 5 th July, 1859, Judicial Department, 21st July, 1857, p.53, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (18) Ibid.
- (19) Ibid.
- (20) Letter from Lieutenant Stauton to the Secretary to the Government of India, dated 30 July, 1857, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (21) Parliamentary papers, vol. 44, part I of 1857-58, paper No.363, P.37, Enclosure No.3.
- (22) Narrative of Events, dated 31 August, 1857.
- (23) Letter from E.A. Samuells, the Commissioner of Patna to A.R. Young, the Secretary to the government of Bengal, 18 September, 1857, Bihar Archives, Patna.
- (24) Ibid, Dated 20 August, 1857, Vol.2496/B1465, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (25) Datta, K.K., Biography of Kunwar Singh, pp.138-39.
- (26) C.E. Buckland, o.p.cit., p.76.
- (27) Letter from W.S. Herrchel, Officiating Magistrate of Shahabad to E.A. Samuells, the commissioner of the Patna Division No.171, dated the 14th May, 1859, Judicial Department, 2nd June, 1859, pp.51-52, para 8, Bihar State Archives, Patna.



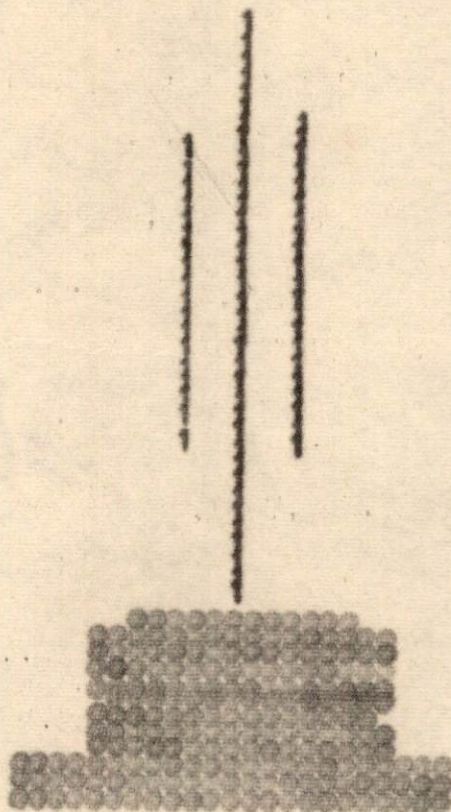
(28) Ibid.

(29) Buckland, op. cit, p. 80

(30) Secret consultation, April 30, 1858, No. 263; Bihar State Archives, Patna.

(31) Ritambhari Devi, Indian Mutiny 1857 in Bihar, p. 47.

(32) Letter from G. Nolan, Deputy Superintendent, Sasaram Levy, to A. N. Cole, Magistrate of Sasaram dated 7 June, 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.





Ph. D. THESIS

THE ROLE OF HIT NARAYAN SINGH OF TIKARI



It is often said that the revolt of 1857-59 had incited many ambitious chieftains of Bihar to try their chance for an increasing of power and prestige.¹ As a matter of fact, many chieftains who wished to strengthen themselves at the expense of the English Raj revolted in July, 1857. But Hit Narayan Singh, the Maharaja of Tikari² was not among those who revolted against the rule of the East India Company. Because he was not an ambitious and powerful chieftain of the district of Zila Bihar (Gaya). He was not at all an influential landlord of the Central Bihar. He never desired to increase his power and enhance his prestige at the cost of the British Raj. Above all, he was a pious ruler and led a and religious life in this material age of Modern Bihar.³

Under the circumstances it is essential to know the family background of Hit Narayan Singh, the Tikari chief, who was after all one among the principal land-lords of the central Bihar.⁴ As far as the historical record says the Tikari estate came into limelight after the fall of the Mughal Empire following the invasion of Nadir Shaha in 1739.^{4B} It is said that Dhir Singh was the founder of this family. He was a Bhumiher Brahman by caste and



faithless and cruel and had acquired a valuable estate consisting of S^unant, Skill, Ukri, Bhelawar, Angti and Mahir in Zila Bihar and several other estates in Ramgarh.⁶ He obtained the title of Raja from Muhammad Shah, the Mughal Emperor, on the recommendation of Alivardi Khan (the Nawab of Bengal) whom he (Sundar Singh of Tikari) had given active support in resisting the devastations of the Marathas and in putting down a dangerous rebellion in the city of Patna.⁷ Unfortunately the Tikari chief was assassinated in 1758 by the captain of his guard named Shah Ghulam Ghaur, who was the son of the famous Shah Hassan Kadiiri, the man of Lucknow.⁸

According to Francis Buchanan, the Late Sundar Singh of Tikari had three sons of whom the first (Buniad Singh) was succeeded to the Raj. But this view of Buchanan was not acceptable to many scholars of Modern Bihar. Some scholars are of the view that Buniad Singh was adopted as his son.⁹ In fact, he was his nephew.

However, Buniad Singh was the successor of Sundar Singh. This new chief of Tikari was a great personality of his time. He founded a village in Sahibganj in the present Gaya district and called it after his own name "Buniadganj".¹⁰ It appeared from the government records that he was a peace loving man. He did not believe in violence. His nobleman placed himself under the protection of the British government. This loyalty proved costly to the Tikari chief. On account of his friendly attitude towards the Company's government



Nawab Mir Kasim Ali Khan, the controversial Nawab of Bengal, put him to death in 1762.¹¹

Shortly after this tragic event, the late Buniad Singh had a posthumous son named Mitrajit Singh, the most illustrated member of the Tikari dynasty. When Mir Kasim came to know this news, he sent a party to kill the infant son of the late chief of Tikari Raj. But the mother of Mitrajit Singh succeeded in saving the life of her child in a place of safety till after the battle of Buxar(1764).

At the time of the accession of Mitrajit Singh (who was then infant) to the Zamindari, Pitambar Singh, the ancestor of the Maqsudpur family, also laid a claim over the Raj. It is interesting to note that Pitambar Singh had got a Sanad from Mir Zafar Ali, the last Nawab of Bengal, conveying a grant of 26 villages in lieu of Malikana in pargana Sanaut and Karhat, in the execution of which order he obtained Parwanas from Shitab Rai and Madho Ram, amil of Pargana Sanat, giving to him the possession of the villages.¹²

But inspite of the strong claims put forth by Pitambar Singh, the rule of primogeniture prevalent in the family, seems to have been maintained. So Mitrajit Singh, the son of Buniad Singh, succeeded to the Raj. Unfortunately the new Raja of Tikari defaulted in discharging his duty. On account of this default Shitab Rai deprived the Tikari-chief of nearly all his possessions. The confiscated Zamindari was let in farm, for discharging the arrears. Mitrajit Singh was greatly disturbed to learn and see the action of Shitab Rai.



Against him, the Tikari chief sent a petition to the Collector of Zila Bihar for restoring of his Zamindari and Malikana to him and promised to pay the arrears. The Collector was sympathetic to him. So he forwarded the petition of the Raja to the Board of Revenue for the final order. The Board of Revenue accepted the proposal of Mitrajit Singh and directed Thomas Law, the Collector of Zila Bihar to restore to the Raja his malikana on the side of the Sone and other malikana lands and Zamindaris on the express condition of his discharging the balances of revenue.

Thomas Law made the malguzari settlement of the Tikari Zamindari with Mitrajit Singh on January 17, 1788.¹³ As a matter of fact, it was a great achievement for the Tikari Chief. Soon thereafter, his ability and statesmanship won for him the approval of the Imperial court of Delhi, which honoured him with the title of "Maharaja" a title that was recognised by the English subsequently.¹⁴ Since then Mitrajit Singh became a staunch friend to the company Raj. During the revolt of Kolhan, the Tikari chief assisted the company's troops in quelling the rebels with his own forces.

After the death of Mitrajit Singh in 1841, the Tikari Raj was divided between his two sons, Hit Narayan Singh and Modnarayan Singh. The former got nine-sixteenth and the latter seven-sixteenths of the property.¹⁵ Hitnarayan Singh the elder and received a letter of condolence from the company's government. Subsequently, on the tenth (10th) November, 1885 he (Hit Narayan Singh) was honoured



with the title of Maharaja accompanied by a Khilat from Lord Hardings.¹⁶ Above all it was a great achievement of his life.

It is remarkable to note that Hit Narayan Singh's rule was significant in the History of Tikari Raj because the revolt of 1857-59 took place during his life time. When in the last week of July, 1857 Bihar plunged into chaos and confusion and the rule of the East India Company appeared to be vanished in this part of the lower provinces, there was no political activity existement in the Tikari estate in favour of the English.

Describing the grim situation, A Money, the Magistrate and Collector of Zila Bihar reported on the 28th of July, 1887 that the mutineers of Dinapur has thrown the district of Zila Bihar into a ferment.¹⁷ The attitude of Zamindars was also not friendly. Many of them were ready to rise against Government. At that time Hit Narayan Singh of Tikari maintained a stony silence. He was indifferent and unmindful of the events. It appeared to him that as if nothing had happened in the neighbourhood. He behaved like an ~~un~~uninformed chieftain. As a matter of fact there was no sense of dedication and urgency in him. So he was the least concerned about the uprising of the people and the sepoys. So his inactivity offended the authorities of Patna and Gaya on account of his mild nature, the Tikari chief was not considered as a political heavy weight for them (officials of the company) on account of his reluctant attitude, he was never recognized as a great and wise politician in the



the British records. After all it did not matter to him. He continued his normal life with fear and risk.

So far the Tikari Chief's personality was concerned, he was not popular with his raiyats because he never cared for the welfare of his people. He never tried to win the confidence and co-operation of his people residing in his Raj. It is very shocking and a matter of shame that he never talked about poverty and exploitation and never made an attempt to reduce sufferings and grievances of his raiyats.¹⁸

On the other hand unlike many zamindars of the district, his attitude towards the Company's government was not unfriendly, he was a loyalist by blood and birth. He got the gaddi of Tikari on account of the mercy of the company Raja; therefore, there was no question of his signing against the alien government in this critical hours. He was bound to support and assist the authorities because his estate was totally dependent on them. Above all, it was wrong to say that Tikari chief was had in glove with the rebels and sympathetic with the armed movement of 1857-59.¹⁹

E.A. Samuells, the Commissioner of Patna Division reported the Government of Bengal that the Tikari chief was not enemical towards the government in his critical hour.²⁰ It was a fact that as long as he remained in his gaddi, he never added and abated the reveals in his district. At the same time it is significant to note that when in



August Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur wanted to win the Tikari chief in his favour, the Tikari chief refused to be influenced with the former in this was life and death. ²¹ The Tikari Chief refused to assist Kunwar Singh, the rebel chief of Bihar against the English in the hour of great need, he informed the rebel chief that he had no sufficient resources to take up arms against the English. ²² In this way he distanced himself from the rebels. As a matter of fact, on account of the reluctant support and unco-operative nature, the rebels of the Central Bihar get a set back. Their hopes were belied. At the same time he did not use intimidation and violence to prevent rebels entering his Raj. In this way this grim situation put him at odds with his neighbours and others.

It is not out of place to mention that the Tikari chief was a chase-loving ruler. He did not believe in violences. He hated and disliked disturbances. With this end in view he gave up the management of the Raj in hand of his wife Maharani Indrajit Kunwar in 1857. In 1857 and spent the remaining days of his life at the bank of the Ganges at Patna. He died in 1861. ²³

A new era started in Tikari with the succession of the Maharani on the throne of the Raj. Her succession was an epoch-making event in the history of Tikari Raj. The Maharani was no way inferior in merits, position and respectability to several other distinguished chiefs of the province of Bihar. Unlike her husband she was a practical lady. She was fully aware of the political situation of



of Bihar. She also knew what to do and how to do in this critical hour. So she resolved to extend help to the authorities against the rebels and mutineers of the central zone, so that she could win the goodwill and confidence of the officials at Gaya and Patna.

In spite of extending help to the company's government during the revolt of 1857-59 the house of Tikari was suspected because the district of Zila Bihar was filled with the rebels and mutineers.²⁴ Mode Narayan Singh, other Younger brother of Hit Narayan Singh and the principal land holder of the district had made hobnobbing with the rebels in order to create mischief against the Britishers. He was also in league with Kunwar Singh, he also worked against William Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna.²⁵ Therefore, he was disliked by the officials. He was condemned for his antipathy towards the Britishers.

Contrary to Mode Narayan Singh's play Maharani Indrajit Kunwar of Tikari worked against the interest of the rebels and mutineers of this region. She began to report to the Government regarding the movement of the rebels.²⁶ She also sent informations to the commissioners of Patna regarding the activities and the attitude of the rebels.

When the Europeans left Gaya on 3rd August, 1857, the Maharani was the most unhappy. She felt insecure and helpless because Gaya was much disturbed. The Anti-Government forces were



very strong and active.²⁷ The rebels were led by a person named Jeodhar Singh who with a band of Bhojpur and declaring that the British Raj was over. A large part of the district had gone out of control of the government. In the west the parganas Arwal, Soh, Manera were over-seen by the disaffected men. Men of the roads passed into their control. In the east the area near Nawada was very disturbed. It appeared that the british rule was at an end in Gaya Money was unable to meet with the situation on account of inadequate Military force under him.²⁸

The 5th irregular cavalry of Bhagalpur which had mutinised on August 1, marched to Gaya in the teeth of the opposition of Rattray's party. They were at Hisua on 2 September and had demanded one lakh rupees from the local zamindars.²⁹ Later on they went to Gaya and made an attack upon the judge's house which had been fortified for the protection of the residents but were repulsed. They could not plunder the town. Thereafter they moved towards Tikari (16 miles north-west of Gaya town) on the morning of 9 September, on the morning of 9 September, 1857 in order to collect money from the Maharani of Tikari.

On 11th September the mutineers of Bhagalpur encamped at a distance of one mile south of Tikari. At Tikari they extracted a sum of Rs.10,000/- from the Maharani of Tikari and Mod Karayan singh, the Raja of the Tekari. They plundered and



and destroyed all they could lay hands on 12th September, they were at Daudnagar.³⁰

When the entire district was disturbed on account of the rising of Jeodhar Singh, Hyder Ali Khan, Kausal Singh, the Tikari chief tried her best to keep peace and quietness in her estate by deputing and appointing servants entrusted for the purpose at the several strategic police stations in order to keep down the disaffected and delude raiyats from running riot in committing mischief and harm of any kind.³¹ Her only intention was that she could help and assist the government in this crisis and displayed the spirit of loyalty to the British government so that she could not be suspected in the British camp.

For sometime the Maharani succeeded in keeping peace in her estate. But when Kaushal Singh, a contractor of many villages, rose in revolt against the British government on 4th January, 1858, her raiyats also assisted the contractor. There was no calm in her Jagir. There were, in all, fifteen villages involved in this revolt. The rebels numbered about 2000 in all. They had surrounded wasirganj and looted every house and shop there. Kaushal Singh and his men declared that the English Raj had ended and that they were now the Rajas. It was a shocking news to the Maharani. Her position was embarrassing. Her claim to maintain peace had been falsified. In order to improve her position in the British Circle, she began to spy for the interest of the government and reported regarding the intention and movement of the rebels.³²



In June, 1858, it was rumoured that a batch of Shahabad insurgents had crossed the Sone river and was coming to attack Tikari. The Maharani became panicky. But they did not come to Gaya. Thereafter Tikari chief heaved a sigh of relief to learn this news. But she continued to live in tension since then.

Jeodhar Singh let loose a sign of terror in the large part of the district of Gaya in 1858, later on he threatened to the Tikari chief (Maharani), her household, her place and other possession with destruction, rapine and plunder.³³ She felt helplessness and defenceless. She requested Halliday, the lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, for extending help in this critical hour. Immediately the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal directed Money, the Collector of Silla Bihar to send two companies of the Madras Rifles, accompanied by a civil officer for her protection.³⁴ The official came to her rescue in the most opportune time. On account of the arrival of a detachment of Madras Sepoys at Tikari, bands of the rebels under Jeodhar Singh could not dare to attack the fort and place of the Maharani. They were unable to plunder the towns which was ably defended by the Tikari men and the Madras Sepoys. For sometime they remained in the neighbourhood of the fort but no attempt of attack was made upon.³⁵ Soon thereafter, the rebel-chief (Jeodhar Singh) and his party left the place. On learning this news, (the departure of Jeodhar Singh from the neighbourhood of Tikari) the Maharani expressed thanks to the government. Once again she began to apply her entire skill and ~~express~~ experience in favour of the government.



The Maharani exhorted people for co-operation in order to frustrate the attempt of the rebels and to get rid of lawlessness. As a matter of fact, people of here Raj by and large remained aloof. On account of her work, she was in the good book of the Britishers. She was praised for her friendly attitude towards the company's government.³⁶ In a letter to the Maharani of Tikari, A.R.Young, the secretary of the government of Bengal wrote that on account of her good will towards the government, the rebels of the district were fast getting disillusioned.³⁷ When the revolt in Gaya had been crushed in December 1858, the Maharani of Tikari requested the government for suitable rewards and acknowledgement.³⁸ In reply the government informed the Maharani that she deserved every kind of praise and remained a loyal into the last. On account of her, rewards would be freely given to her in a suitable time.³⁹ Later on she occupied an honourable position in the eyes of people on account of getting rewards.⁴⁰ In this way, all can say that if the company's government helped the Tikari-chief to get throne during Nitrajit Singh's time, Hit Narayan Singh and her wife worked for the preservation of the British Raj in Bihar facing many kinds of odds and difficulties in handling the piquant situation. It is true that if the Maharani of Tikari did not extend support to the Britishers, the Government would have to face hardship in restoring peace and normalcy in the district of Gaya. So here contribution to the British Government was not less significant.⁴¹

Foot Notes:

- (1) George Dodd, The History of the Indian Revolt, 1856, 57 and 58, p.388.
- (2) The town of Tikari has a long recorded history of the Tikari Raj since 1739. It is said that Dhir Singh was the founder of Tikari Raj. He settled at Tikari and made it as his headquarters. In 1857 this town contained a population of about 9,000 persons. It was a popular and tiny town in the district of Gaya. It is situated on the left bank of the river Morhar. It was about 76 miles away from Patna. It was in north-west of Gaya. above all, it was living town during the revolt of 1857-59. (by Roy Choudhary, P.C. Bihar District Gazetteers, Gaya, pp.338-40).
- (3) Ghosh, Loke Nath, the Modern History of the Indian chiefs, Rajas and Zamindars Vol. II, p.429.
- (4) Tayler, W; The Patna Crisis, p.89.
- (4B) Judicial Department, No.47, 13th January, 1859, pp.187-88, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (5) Ghosh, L.N.; Op.cit, p.428.
- (6) Roy Choudhary, op.cit, p.339,
- (7) Ghosh, L.N. op.cit,
- (8) Ibid.
- (9) The Bihar Herald, November 16, 1899.
- (10) Ghosh, L.N.; Op.cit.
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Roy choudhary, op.cit, p.339
- (13) Ghosh, L.N., Op.cit, p.429.



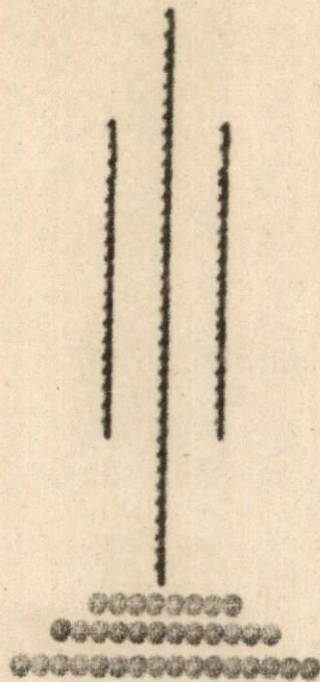
- (14) Roy Choudhary, op.cit, p.339
- (15) Ghosh, L.N. op.cit, p.429
- (16) Roy Choudhary, op.cit, p.339.
- (17) Ibid, p.45.
- (18) Political Department, August, 1860, No.95, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (19) Roy Choudhary, op.cit, p.47.
- (20) Political Department, Aug. 1860, No.95, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (21) Datta, K.K. Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh, p.95.
- (22) Ibid, p.97.
- (23) Ghosh, L.N., op.cit, p.429.
- (24) Tayler, op.cit, p.89.
- (25) Ibid,
- (26) Monthly bundles, -Letter from A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the E.A. Samuels, the commissioned of Patna division, April 1st 1858, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (27) Parliamentary papers, Vol.44, Part III of 1852-58, Further papers No.7 (in continuation of No.5) relative to Mutinies in the East Indies; pp.105-108.
- (28) Chatopadhyaya, H.P., The Sepoy Mutiny, 1857, p.127.
- (29) Parliamentary papers, vol.44 part I of 1857-58, paper No.363 (C.2295), p.61. Enclosure-I, in No.6, Narrative of Events, dated 12 September 1857.
- (30) Parliamentary papers, vol 44 part I of 1857-58 paper No.363 (C.2295), p.68, Enclousre 2 in No.6, narative of events, dated 19 Sept. 1857.



- (31) Petition of Maharani Indrajit Kunwar, wife of Maharaja Hit Narayan Singh of Tikari. to F.J. Halliday, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal Fort William, judicial Department, 6th Jan. 1859, p.148, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (32) Monthly Bundles-Letter from A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal to R.A. Samuel the commissioner of Patna division, 14, March, 1859, No.1661, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (33) Petition of Maharani Indrajit Kunwar, wife of Hit Narayan Singh, the Maharaja of Tekari. to F.J.
- ~~(34)~~ Halliday, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Fort William, judicial Department, 6th Jan. 1859, p.148, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (34) Tayler, op.cit, p.26.
- (35) Ibid.
- (36) Letter from A.R. Young, Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to Maharani Indrajit Kunwar No.113, dt. the 6th Jan. 1859. Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- (37) Ibid.
- (38) Monthly Bundles- Letter from A.R. Young to the Secretary Govt. of Bengal to the commissioner of Patna, No.3568, 6 June, 1859, Bihar state archives, Patna.
- (39) Letter from R.A. Samuels, Commissioner of the Patna Division to the Magistrate of Gaya, No.19, 10 December, 1858, judicial Department, Fort William, 27 January, 1859, pp.730-31; Bihar State Archives, Patna.



(40) Letter from E.A.Samuels, Commissioner of Patna to A.R.Young,
Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No.459, dated 22,
1859, Fort william, judicial Department, 31 March, 1859, Bihar State
Archives, Patna.





THE ROLE OF JAYPRAKASH SINGH OF DEO MUNGA



Mutinies of Sepoys in Bihar and Upper-provinces created a great unrest in various districts of the lower provinces in 1857. The district of Gaya (Zila Bihar) was one of them. This district became the high road for all mutineers from the East. Not only that, it had provided an opportunity for some people to take up arms against the rule of the East India Company. Because the British officers left Gaya, the headquarters, at 6 P.M. on August 3, 1857. As soon as the mujibs learnt of it, they broke open the jail gate and released the prisoners. Thereafter indiscriminate plunder continued for several days. As a matter of fact, there was no government in the district since then.¹ Thereafter many powerful and influential chieftains of Central Bihar felt that the British Raj had come to an end. But Jay Prakash Singh, the Raja of Deo Munga² was not among them. He did not believe that the British Raj had disappeared from India, so soon and so easily. No wonder he was greatly pained to hear this news because he was a great champion of the British cause. In order to know his nature, character and role, we have to study his family's history.

Jay Prakash Singh belonged to an elucient and highly respectable family of Deo Munga estate. His family was the principal one of the district. of Gaya. The history of the Deo



Raja started from the rise of Rai Bhan Singh, who was a Sesadia Rajput and the younger brother of the Rana of Udaipur or Mewar in Rajputana.³

Rai Bhan Singh was an eminent man. During a pilgrimage to Jaggarnath, Rai Bhan Singh assisted and rescued the widow- the Rani of Umgarh⁴ from great difficulties in which she (Rani) was placed by the rebellion of her raiyats and troops after the death of her husband. In recognition of this important service, the widow Rani who was old and childless, bestowed on him the Umgarh R_{aj}.⁵

Thereafter Bhan Singh and two of his successors lived at Umgarh. Later on their descendants removed to Deo in Gaya. Sometime before the commencement of the British rule in India. So Umga Garh or Umga had been deserted. It lost its glory once for all.

Raja Chattarpati Singh of Deo was an important ruler of this dynasty. When he grew old, Warren Hastings sought his help and co-operation against Chait Singh of Banaras in 1781. He considered the request of governor General as a got-sent opportunity. Soon thereafter he sent his son Fateh Narayan Singh to assist the East India Company's forces in this war. In his first engagement Fateh Narayan Singh fought bravely under the command of Major Crawford. On account of his bravery he was honoured and friendship with the English was strengthened. However, he also displayed his valour and courage in a battle against the Pindaries under the command of Major Russell. Little wonder he



obtained a nankar or rent free holding of eleven mauzes from the East India Company for his good services in war against Chait Singh. At the same time the Raj of Palamau was recommended to be presented to him for the part he took in the Pindari-war. The Palamau Raj was finally exchanged for sundry mauzes in the district of Gaya, yielding an annual income of Rs.3000/-⁶. In this way Fateh Narayan Singh received both jagir as well as respect from the officials of the British company.

Later on Fateh Narayan Singh was succeeded by his son Raja Ghanshyam Singh, who proved himself to be as brave as his ancestors.⁷ The new chief of Deo was also a remarkable chieftain of this house. He was a successful ruler. He rendered efficient service by joining the British soldiers where they were fighting against the insurgents at Surguja.⁸ In recognition of his services, the Company's government intended to make suitable rewards to the loyal and royal family of Ghanshyam Singh of Deo. At last, after a prolonged discussion the Governor-General in council finally decided to bestow the estate of Palamau to the Deo-chiefs the son of Raja Fateh Narayan Singh who died in the year 1814. It was decided to transfer the rights which the government had acquired in Palamau to Ghanshyam Singh, with some abatement from the former Jumma.⁹

Raja Ghanshyam Singh took possession of the estate of Palamau on June 22, 1816.¹⁰ Major Roughsedge came from Surguja to help the Raja in taking possession of his new assignment. Later on



Ghanashyam Singh's men with the help of the British officers, tried their best to bring the defaulting Zamindars to look. Their actions only roused the suspicion of the people regarding the intentions of the new authorities. Ghanashyam Singh took a stern attitude by not accepting the revenue of Bikramjit Singh of Chainpur and Chhatrapati Rai of Bistrampur.¹¹

Consequently, some Palamanu Jagirdars rose against their new masters. The insurrection actually broke out on March 23, 1817.¹² The fact was that the object of the insurgents was the expulsion of Raja Ghanashyam Singh from palamanu and the re-establishment of the Chero Raj under Churaman Rai.¹³ Later the insurgents were crushed with the help of the British troops by the Deo-chief. In the last long, the British authorities at Calcutta ordered the attachment of the estate of Palamanu on March 24, 1818. They put it under the management of Lindsay, the Assistant Collector of Ramgarh. The Deo Raja was compensated for the loss by the abatement of Rs.3000/- from the revenue of his paternal estates Deo Khas an arrangement which he finally accepted with satisfaction.¹⁴

Raja Ghanashyam was succeeded by his son Mitra Khan Singh after his death. The new Deo-chief was very popular and well versed in military tactics. He was also a great loyalist. He always waited for seeking the blessing of the authorities of Calcutta. He rendered good services to the company's government in quelling the Kol insurrection in Chotanagpur in 1832.¹⁵



Later on he received a reward of remission of Rs.1000/- from revenue due to the government for his Deo Zamindari.

Raja Mitra Bhan Singh was succeeded by his son, Jay Prakash Singh as the new Deo chief. When he assumed the throne of Deo the estate was spread upto 92 square miles. He was a powerful chieftain of his region. He was very popular among his raiyats because he engaged himself in reducing the grievances of his people. At the same time he possessed a mild nature. He had no oppressive conduct. Above all, he was not a refractory chieftain. On account of his behaviour and attitude, the feelings of the subject were in favour of the Deo Raja. He had always secured good will and cooperation of his men in time of crisis and need.

The reign of terror engulfed the district of Gaya after July, 1857. The whole town was held to ransom by hooligans and the moral of the loyalist was very low. The most of the Zamindars were indifferent and disaffected. The general population of the district were ready to take up arms against the authorities of the East India Company and discontent was prevailing in the entire district. At that time Raja Jay Prakash Singh of Deo came forward in favour of the East India Company with men and money. It was not a strange thing for the Deo-chief. Because since the commencement of the British rule in India, his ancestors remained always attached to the interests of the alien government and rendered to it their loyal services from time to time facing heavy odds and bothering nothing.



On account of the performance of these services, his ancestors had obtained Parwana signed by the former Governors and the officers of the district. In order to prove his loyalty, the Deo-chief engaged himself in restoring peace in his Zamindari. But he did not possess the capacity to suppress the various elements of disorder.

It is remarkable to note that when in August, 1857 Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur, the rebel-chief of Bihar, had invited Raja Jayprakash Singh of Deo for joining the revolt against the shaky British power.¹⁸ But the Deo-chief flatly refused his proposal and ~~indix~~ invitation. In reply he wrote that he (Jayprakash Singh) had no adequate resources for launching war against the mighty and powerful East India Company's government. While it was well-known that he was also a Rajput by caste. But on account of his selfish motive, he did not assist the rebel-chief (Babu Kunwar Singh) of Bihar.

It was said that the Nawada sub-division was particularly much disturbed after August, 1857. Highway robbery became common. Wazeer guns was also disturbed. But on the other hand, the Aurangabad sub-division was not disturbed. There was no plunder and loot in this part of Gaya. On account of the Deo chief's activity, none had dared to make slogans here that the British Raj was over and Babu Kunwar Singh had become the chief of the State of Bihar.¹⁹ Not a single village plundered the other village on account of the fear of Raja Jay Prakash Singh. It was a fact that no Zamindar had employed the Rajwars for plunder in Aurangabad because the Deo-chief's influence over other



land-holders in the sub-division. In this way he maintained peace and normalcy in his area of influence. He did a great service to the vanishing power(company's government).

On the 2nd September, 1857 A. Money, the Magistrate of Zila Bihar, asked the government of Bengal for a few Sikhs or European troops.²⁰ On the same day came the reply from A.R. Young, the Secretary to the Government of Bengal that expect no Europeans. While the Magistrate of Gaya was considerably alarmed at the deteriorating political situation in the district. He urged the military authorities and the Zamindars for help to quell the disturbances. Thus while the authorities were making the necessary preparations for quelling the disturbances, the insurgents attacked the thana. They (the rebels) pillaged the thana building. In this hour of peril the Deo-chief was alone with the forces of the government. He was the guide, friend and philosopher to A. Money, the Magistrate of Gaya during the disturbances.

A rebel named Fateh Singh collected some followers in the district and organised several plundering raids in the western part of the district. It was impossible for the Deo-Raja to tolerate the lawlessness created by the rebels. So Jayprakash Singh with the help of Sonapur Raja put the rebel down without the help of the English troops.²¹

Joodhar Singh a noted rebel-leader of the district entered the district from the west in June, 1858. With a band of



of Bhojpurimen, he was doing much mischief. On account of his threat and fear, the Zamindars were unable to collect their rents in gold coins and old rupees.²² But the government had no force to arrest and defeat Jeodhar Singh. Against him the Deo-chief was prepared to work. When captain Rattray had been despatched on the side of the Son river to deal with the dreaded rebel, Deo Raja's armies were with the Sikh troops. On the 4th July Jeodhar Singh was defeated at place called Kasma. There was a band of the Deo-chief in this defeat. At the same time this victory had the effect of clearing the whole of the Gaya District of rebels.²³

It proved beyond doubt that Raja Jay Prakash Singh was an ardent supporter of the company Raj and rendered every assistance in his power. Above all he rendered valuable services to the government against a plundering gang of the rebels. At the same time he worked for the restoration of peace and normalcy. He placed a number of his own men for protecting the police chauki of Munjheswan and prevented a rebel from plundering the pargana of Belownja. The Raja had also given some assistance to the authorities in Shahabad and Palamau.²⁴ The Deo Raja entertained for a short time, a few men of their own expense. He had kept up a body of 26 men on the grand Trunk Road at his own expense.²⁵ He also lent his elephants to the government for service against the rebels.²⁶

By the end of 1858, complete normalcy had been re-established in the district of Gaya. Thereafter the Deo-chief heaved



a sigh of relief. As regards the disturbances of the Gaya District he was agreeable with the view expressed by Sir J.F.J.Halliday, the first lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who observed that it was tolerably evident that except with a few of the bad characters with whom riot and disorder were a trade and profession, the rebels had also met here-with but little sympathy.²⁷

With the restoration of peace and tranquillity in the district of Gaya as well as in Bihar, attention was turned to rewarding those who had helped in suppressing the rising and punishing the ring leaders of the rebels. The services of Raja Jay Prakash Singh, the Deo-chief, were highly praised by the authorities at Calcutta. A .Money wrote about him " the spirit and bravery exercised by the Raja Jay Prakash Singh deserved the highest praise."²⁸ He exerted himself to the very utmost to preserve the peace of the pargana and there is no doubt whatsoever that had he been well seconded he would have been able to put down the rebels.²⁹ P.J.Halliday, the first lieutenant-Governor of Bengal too praised the Raja's active role in the suppression of the disturbances.³⁰ Consequently, the commissioner of Patna Division forwarded to the government of Bengal an application from the Raja praying for the title of Maharaja. In considering his valuable services immediately conferred upon him a title of Maharaj and a Khilat.³¹ As a matter of fact, the Maharaja of Deo got many honours and rewards from the government. He was the most honoured man in the list of the government. All in all, it was Jay Prakash Singh who



got first time the title of Maharaja alongwith the Raja of Hathuwa and Bettiah.³² This achievement was remarkable in the history of Deo family.

FOOT NOTES ARE HERE

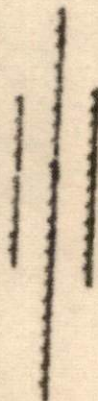
1. The Indian History Congress, Thirty-first Session, Varanasi, 1969, p.382.
2. Umga was a village in the south-East of the Aurangabad subdivision, which was called Munga. It was originally the seat of the Deo Raj. Deo was a village in Aurangabad subdivision. It was situated six miles South-east of the town of Aurangabad. Previously it was a religious place and was famous for the sun Temple.
3. It is remarkable to note that from Umga where the Deo Raj family was said to have shifted to Deo. So Deo came into limelight on account of the capital of the Deo Rajas who were one of the oldest families in Bihar. (Roy Chaudhary, p.c.) Bihar District Gazetteers, Gaya p.113.
3. Ghosh, L.N.; The Modern History of the Indian chiefs, Rajas, Zamindars, part II, p.426.
4. Ibid.
5. Umga garh or Umga Hill was situated on the east of Aurangabad. It was formerly inhabited by men of superior skill in the arts of war. It had an excellent fort of rare strength and architectural design. (Ghosh, L.N., op.cit.)
6. Ibid, p.427.
7. Roy Choudhary, op.cit, p.314.
8. Ghosh, op.cit, p.427.
9. Territorial Revenue Letter to the court of Directors, dated November 29, 1814, para 29.

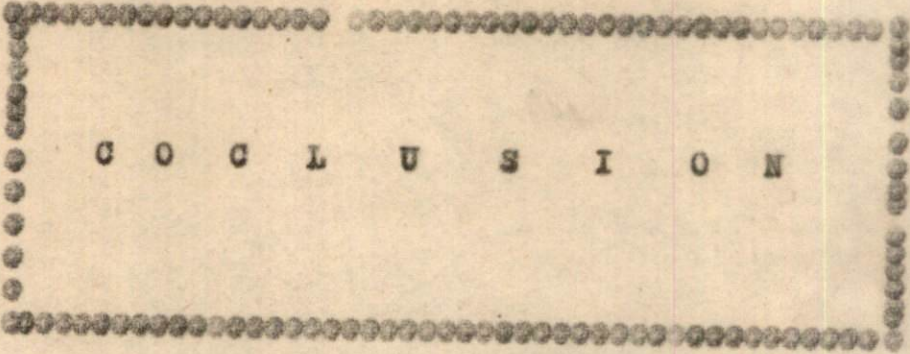


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15. Roy Chaudhary, op.cit,p.314.
16. Political Department, August,1860, Vo.95, Bihar State Archives Patna.
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23. Buckland, Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors, Vol.I,p.94.



24. Letter from H. Devies Deputy Magistrate of Sherghaty to A. Money, the Magistrate of Zila Bihar, December 22, 1858, Gaya Collectorate, Gaya.
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28. Political Department, August, 1860, No. 95, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
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C O N C L U S I O N



This work covers the part played by a number of leading zamindars and common people of the central Bihar during the revolt of 1857-58. In this life and death struggle the landed aristocracy of the central Bihar and the rebels played a major and heroic role and greatly influenced the course of the movement. As the society of the last century (the Nineteenth Century) was feudal in character, their activities had a great impact on the various classes of people.

As a matter of fact both the loyalist zamindars and the rebels took part in this movement with courage, determination and devotion. The rebels group includes the names of Jeodhar Singh and Hyder Ali Khan of Zila Bihar, Nishan Singh and Harekrishna Singh of Shahabad and Pir Ali Khan and Ali Karim of the distict of Patna were the distinguished leaders and torch-bearers of the movement. They left no stone unturned to drive out the Britishers from this ancient land. On the other hand, there was a loyalist group consists of Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon, Shah Kabiruddin of Sahasram, Raja Hit Narayan Singh of Tikari and Raja Jayprakash Singh of Deo Munga. These loyal zamindars did all they could for winning the favour of the Britishers. They stood firmly behind their British masters in this hour of peril.

The present work has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the family back ground, career and early activities of Jeodhar Singh and Hyder Ali Khan of Zila Bihar.



These rebel leaders came out of common people. They had infused much enthusiasm among the rural people of Zila Bihar and Shahabad. They had created a great stir in entire region of the central Bihar. The second chapter deals with Nishan Singh and Harekrishna Singh who came out picture on account of Babu Kunwar's rising in July, 1857. They played the most significant part not only in the Magadh-region but also in Avadh. The third chapter has been devoted to Pir Ali Khan and Ali Karim of Patna who were glorious in character and in their role. Their activities were not limited in Patna and Gaya district of Bihar only. Besides they also worked against the Britishers in the upper provinces (Uttar Pradesh). The fourth chapter narrates Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon who remained loyal to the government of the East India Company. He did not fish in troubled water. Instead he rendered the vanishing power valuable services in crushing the revolt. The fifth chapter deals with Raja Hit Narayan Singh of Tikari and Jay Prakash Singh of Deomunga who rendered every assistance to the British authorities in fighting with the rebels of their areas of influence. Shah Kabiruddin of Sasaram was a great land holder of his subdivision. He also supported the authorities in quelling the disturbances without fear and favour. His active role was a curse for the rebels of Shahabad. In the end comes the conclusion followed by bibliography.

Jeodhar Singh of Zila Bihar had no grudge against the company's government. But the fact is that he was a man of independent nature. He was a freedom loving person. On account of



his nature he revolted against the Company's administration in 1857. In order to drive the Britishers from India, he had collected a large number of followers and plundered indiscriminately. Later on he even boasted that he would destroy every public building between the Sone river and Monghyr. The rebels under him kept clear of any stations where the British troops were posted. They carried on depredations in the scattered thanas. On the 4th July 1858, Jeodhar Singh was defeated at Kasma. This defeat of the rebel-chief of Zila Bihar had the demoralising effect on the rebels of the district. On the other hand, his defeat enabled the English to re-establish their authorities in the district. This victory sealed the fate of the rebel-forces in Gaya. Law and order was gradually restored in the district. In this way this rebel-chief failed in his attempt to overthrow the Britishers from India.

Haider Ali Khan was one of the most influential leaders of the district of Gaya. He led the rebels in Nawada subdivision. In this sub-division a lot of trouble was created by him. He had taken possession of Rajgir with 1200 to 1400 men. He was of the view that the English Raj had come to an end on account of the mutiny of the Sepoys of Dinapur on 25th July, 1857. With this end in view he created a reign of terror in some parts of the district. Later on a party of 200 Sikhs under Captain Rattray was sent to deal with him. In this encounter Haider Ali Khan was defeated. Thereafter he was arrested and hanged on the charges of rebellion.



and plunder. It was certain that after his arrest and death, peace and tranquillity was restored in the sub-division of Nawada and Sherghati in last of October, 1857.

Nishan Singh was a friend, guide and philosopher of Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur. He had no personal grievances against the alien power. At the same time he had no love for the continuation of the British Raj in India. He rose in revolt when Babu Kunwar Singh ~~rose~~ rose against the company's rule in the last week of July, 1857. He was with Kunwar Singh in every war launched against the Britishers. When Kunwar Singh marched towards Avadh in August, 1857, he was along with him. He fought war with his mentor at Bijaygarh, Mirzapur, Banda, Kalpi and Azamgarh. In April, 1858, Nishan Singh came back to Jagdishpur. He participated in the war against captain Le-Grand on April 29, 1857. In this encounter Le-grand was put to death along with two other officers.

After Kunwar Singh's death, the brave lion of Shahabad, on 26 April, 1858, at Jagdishpur, Nishan Singh extended his full-co-operation to Amar Singh, the younger brother of Kunwar Singh. He remained loyal to Amar Singh till his death. After May, 1858, he had fallen ill. So he was going to his village home (Buddeo) on a plangin after a long time. In this situation he was captured by Nolan, the Deputy Superintendent, Sasaram, on the evening of 5 June, 1858. Thereafter a fake trial took place and Nishan Singh was blown away from a gun at Sasaram in the morning of June 7, 1858. After his death a great



menace disappeared from the scene of Shahabad. In this death the Shahabad fighters lost one of their brave leaders, Nishan Singh, who never bothered for his life.

Harekrishna Singh was the real hero of the district of Shahabad. It was he who was the prime mover of 1857 in Bihar and a great personality of modern Bihar. He was the Salar Jung of Babu Kunwar Singh. It is Harekrishna Singh who is credited for bringing the fence sitting three thousand soldiers of Dinapur to the mutinous path. Actually it was Hare Krishna Singh who kept aloft the flag of the rebellion from 21st April, 1858 to 29th August, 1859, even after the death of Kunwar Singh. But the irony is that he was termed as a traitor by poets, writers and dramatists of the Rhojpur region.

He did not limited himself into war against the Britishers in Bihar only, on the other hand, he crossed the boundary of Magadh and launched war in Avadh. He started a paralled government in Shahabad and became all in all of the new regime. As a matter of fact he was the greatest source of terror to the Britisher.

Later on he was arrested in the district of Benares on 29th August, 1859. A fake trial was conducted by R.J. Richardson, Judge and special Commissioner of Shahabad in the middle of December, 1859. Thereafter he was taken from the Arrah jail to the Chauk of Jagdishpur and there he was hanged by the neck until he died.

Pir Ali Khan was an organiser and plotter of the first degree. He was not a native of Bihar. On account of love for the Nawab of



Avadh, he came a conspirator and organised a great plot against the Britishers at Patna. If his countrymen cooperated him he would have succeeded in July, 1857. But this book-keeper and seller failed in his effort on account of fear created by William Taylor, the Commissioner of Patna. He was also put to death on account of his hostile attitude.

Ali Karim was another conspirator of Bihar. He was extremely sorry to see the state of affairs of the lower provinces. He hated the Britishers for ill of the economy of the country. He was not caught in Bihar. He went to upper provinces (Uttar Pradesh) and launched many war against the Britishers. He could not be apprehended by all kinds of means. So, he died as a freeman. But he could not see his country free from the foreign yoke. His this desire remained unfulfilled.

In contrast to them Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon was not a great loyalist. In the very beginning of the revolt, he remained indifferent. He did not extend his support to the Britishers against his kith and kin. After October, 1857 when the rebel-forces faced many defeats at the hands of the Britishers and the dream of free India was falsified, Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh existed the authorities of Bihar with men and money. In order to gain the sympathy and bless he also lent his elephants and horses to the government for services against the rebels. Thus we find that the Dumraon-chief was a loyal supporter of the British government. It was sure that if the Raja cooperated Babu Kunwar Singh in his

fight against the Britishers, in that case the history of freedom movement in Shahabad might have been different.

In contrast to Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumaron, Hit Narayan Singh, the Raja of Tikari, was a loyalist by blood and birth. But he was a peace-loving man. He did not like violence. So he maintained silence when the rebellion spread in the district of Gaya in August, 1857. He did not become active for the interest of the company-Raj. His Rani Indrajit Kunwar was also lukewarm to support the Britishers. When she was pressurised much by the authorities, she openly and actively supported the alien power against her will and desire. Thereafter she lent every support to the British government in fighting against the rebels. She began to do every thing in view of getting favour of the Britishers. Later on she was praised by the J. Halliday, the first lieutenant-Governor of Bengal for the assistance against her countrymen. It is obvious if the Tikari chief helped Jeodhar Singh and Haidar Ali Khan, the Britishers had to face hardship in restoring peace and normalcy in the district of Gaya.

Kabiruddin Kha, the Shah of Sasaram also happened to be a staunch supporter of the supporter of the British. He always felt that his interests were bound with those of the Company's government. So when the revolt of 1857-59 broke out in August, 1857 in Bihar, he gave every help to the British authorities. He rejected the proposal of Babu Kunwar Singh to join the revolt. He felt that the Britishers could not be defeated at any cost. So with this end in view he remained loyalist. unto the last. He helped the authorities at Sasaram in arresting Nishan Singh in June, 1858. The lieutenant Governor of Bengal felt convinced that Shah Kabiruddin had offered praiseworthy aid and support to the government during the whole

progress of the rebellion. If he were rebellion, the mighty British power had to face grim situation in restoring peace and tranquillity in Sasaram.

Raja Jay Prakash Singh of Deo Munga had a long record of loyalty to the company's government. Since the time of Fateh Singh the Deo-Raja was in league with the Britishers. Raja Jay Prakash Singh provided all kinds of help to the alien government without any hesitation. He was full of enthusiasm and praise for the British masters. He had inherited a sense of loyalty to the British from his illustrious ancestors. It was quite fitness of things that he also rejected Kunwar Singh's appeal for joining the revolt. He was assured from the very beginning that Britishers would be ultimately victorious. Therefore, he did not miss any opportunity to prove his unflinching loyalty. He and his men rendered valuable services to the East India Company's government in crushing the revolt.



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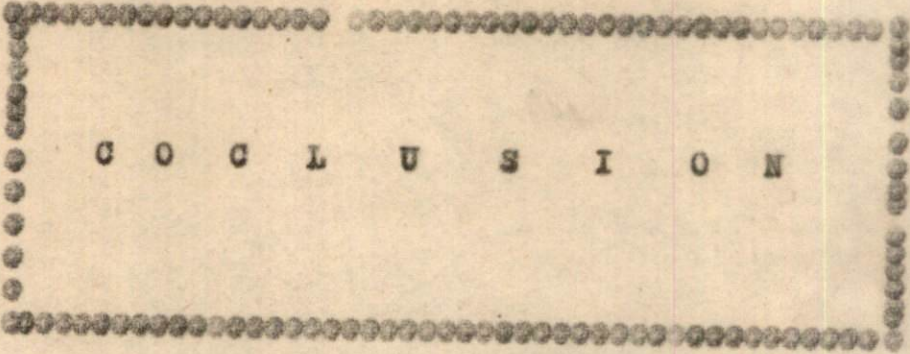
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C O N C L U S I O N



This work covers the part played by a number of leading zamindars and common people of the central Bihar during the revolt of 1857-58. In this life and death struggle the landed aristocracy of the central Bihar and the rebels played a major and heroic role and greatly influenced the course of the movement. As the society of the last century (the Nineteenth Century) was feudal in character, their activities had a great impact on the various classes of people.

As a matter of fact both the loyalist zamindars and the rebels took part in this movement with courage, determination and devotion. The rebels group includes the names of Jeodhar Singh and Hyder Ali Khan of Zila Bihar, Nishan Singh and Harekrishna Singh of Shahabad and Pir Ali Khan and Ali Karim of the distict of Patna were the distinguished leaders and torch-bearers of the movement. They left no stone unturned to drive out the Britishers from this ancient land. On the other hand, there was a loyalist group consists of Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon, Shah Kabiruddin of Sahasram, Raja Hit Narayan Singh of Tikari and Raja Jayprakash Singh of Deo Munga. These loyal zamindars did all they could for winning the favour of the Britishers. They stood firmly behind their British masters in this hour of peril.

The present work has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the family back ground, career and early activities of Jeodhar Singh and Hyder Ali Khan of Zila Bihar.



These rebel leaders came out of common people. They had infused much enthusiasm among the rural people of Zila Bihar and Shahabad. They had created a great stir in entire region of the central Bihar. The second chapter deals with Nishan Singh and Harekrishna Singh who came out picture on account of Babu Kunwar's rising in July, 1857. They played the most significant part not only in the Magadh-region but also in Avadh. The third chapter has been devoted to Pir Ali Khan and Ali Karim of Patna who were glorious in character and in their role. Their activities were not limited in Patna and Gaya district of Bihar only. Besides they also worked against the Britishers in the upper provinces (Uttar Pradesh). The fourth chapter narrates Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon who remained loyal to the government of the East India Company. He did not fish in troubled water. Instead he rendered the vanishing power valuable services in crushing the revolt. The fifth chapter deals with Raja Hit Narayan Singh of Tikari and Jay Prakash Singh of Deomunga who rendered every assistance to the British authorities in fighting with the rebels of their areas of influence. Shah Kabiruddin of Sasaram was a great land holder of his subdivision. He also supported the authorities in quelling the disturbances without fear and favour. His active role was a curse for the rebels of Shahabad. In the end comes the conclusion followed by bibliography.

Jeodhar Singh of Zila Bihar had no grudge against the company's government. But the fact is that he was a man of independent nature. He was a freedom loving person. On account of



his nature he revolted against the Company's administration in 1857. In order to drive the Britishers from India, he had collected a large number of followers and plundered indiscriminately. Later on he even boasted that he would destroy every public building between the Sone river and Monghyr. The rebels under him kept clear of any stations where the British troops were posted. They carried on depredations in the scattered thanas. On the 4th July 1858, Jeodhar Singh was defeated at Kasma. This defeat of the rebel-chief of Zila Bihar had the demoralising effect on the rebels of the district. On the other hand, his defeat enabled the English to re-establish their authorities in the district. This victory sealed the fate of the rebel-forces in Gaya. Law and order was gradually restored in the district. In this way this rebel-chief failed in his attempt to overthrow the Britishers from India.

Haider Ali Khan was one of the most influential leaders of the district of Gaya. He led the rebels in Nawada subdivision. In this sub-division a lot of trouble was created by him. He had taken possession of Rajgir with 1200 to 1400 men. He was of the view that the English Raj had come to an end on account of the mutiny of the Sepoys of Dinapur on 25th July, 1857. With this end in view he created a reign of terror in some parts of the district. Later on a party of 200 Sikhs under Captain Rattray was sent to deal with him. In this encounter Haider Ali Khan was defeated. Thereafter he was arrested and hanged on the charges of rebellion.



and plunder. It was certain that after his arrest and death, peace and tranquillity was restored in the sub-division of Nawada and Sherghati in last of October, 1857.

Nishan Singh was a friend, guide and philosopher of Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur. He had no personal grievances against the alien power. At the same time he had no love for the continuation of the British Raj in India. He rose in revolt when Babu Kunwar Singh ~~rose~~ rose against the company's rule in the last week of July, 1857. He was with Kunwar Singh in every war launched against the Britishers. When Kunwar Singh marched towards Avadh in August, 1857, he was along with him. He fought war with his mentor at Bijaygarh, Mirzapur, Banda, Kalpi and Azamgarh. In April, 1858, Nishan Singh came back to Jagdishpur. He participated in the war against captain Le-Grand on April 29, 1857. In this encounter Le-grand was put to death along with two other officers.

After Kunwar Singh's death, the brave lion of Shahabad, on 26 April, 1858, at Jagdishpur, Nishan Singh extended his full-co-operation to Amar Singh, the younger brother of Kunwar Singh. He remained loyal to Amar Singh till his death. After May, 1858, he had fallen ill. So he was going to his village home (Buddeo) on a plangin after a long time. In this situation he was captured by Nolan, the Deputy Superintendent, Sasaram, on the evening of 5 June, 1858. Thereafter a fake trial took place and Nishan Singh was blown away from a gun at Sasaram in the morning of June 7, 1858. After his death a great



menace disappeared from the scene of Shahabad. In this death the Shahabad fighters lost one of their brave leaders, Nishan Singh, who never bothered for his life.

Harekrishna Singh was the real hero of the district of Shahabad. It was he who was the prime mover of 1857 in Bihar and a great personality of modern Bihar. He was the Salar Jung of Babu Kunwar Singh. It is Harekrishna Singh who is credited for bringing the fence sitting three thousand soldiers of Dinapur to the mutinous path. Actually it was Hare Krishna Singh who kept aloft the flag of the rebellion from 21st April, 1858 to 29th August, 1859, even after the death of Kunwar Singh. But the irony is that he was termed as a traitor by poets, writers and dramatists of the Rhojpur region.

He did not limited himself into war against the Britishers in Bihar only, on the other hand, he crossed the boundary of Magadh and launched war in Avadh. He started a paralled government in Shahabad and became all in all of the new regime. As a matter of fact he was the greatest source of terror to the Britisher.

Later on he was arrested in the district of Benares on 29th August, 1859. A fake trial was conducted by R.J. Richardson, Judge and special Commissioner of Shahabad in the middle of December, 1859. Thereafter he was taken from the Arrah jail to the Chauk of Jagdishpur and there he was hanged by the neck until he died.

Pir Ali Khan was an organiser and plotter of the first degree. He was not a native of Bihar. On account of love for the Nawab of



Avadh, he came a conspirator and organised a great plot against the Britishers at Patna. If his countrymen cooperated him he would have succeeded in July, 1857. But this book-keeper and seller failed in his effort on account of fear created by William Taylor, the Commissioner of Patna. He was also put to death on account of his hostile attitude.

Ali Karim was another conspirator of Bihar. He was extremely sorry to see the state of affairs of the lower provinces. He hated the Britishers for ill of the economy of the country. He was not caught in Bihar. He went to upper provinces (Uttar Pradesh) and launched many war against the Britishers. He could not be apprehended by all kinds of means. So, he died as a freeman. But he could not see his country free from the foreign yoke. His this desire remained unfulfilled.

In contrast to them Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumraon was not a great loyalist. In the very beginning of the revolt, he remained indifferent. He did not extend his support to the Britishers against his kith and kin. After October, 1857 when the rebel-forces faced many defeats at the hands of the Britishers and the dream of free India was falsified, Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh existed the authorities of Bihar with men and money. In order to gain the sympathy and bless he also lent his elephants and horses to the government for services against the rebels. Thus we find that the Dumraon-chief was a loyal supporter of the British government. It was sure that if the Raja cooperated Babu Kunwar Singh in his

fight against the Britishers, in that case the history of freedom movement in Shahabad might have been different.

In contrast to Raja Maheshwar Bux Singh of Dumaron, Hit Narayan Singh, the Raja of Tikari, was a loyalist by blood and birth. But he was a peace-loving man. He did not like violence. So he maintained silence when the rebellion spread in the district of Gaya in August, 1857. He did not become active for the interest of the company-Raj. His Rani Indrajit Kunwar was also lukewarm to support the Britishers. When she was pressurised much by the authorities, she openly and actively supported the alien power against her will and desire. Thereafter she lent every support to the British government in fighting against the rebels. She began to do every thing in view of getting favour of the Britishers. Later on she was praised by the J. Halliday, the first lieutenant-Governor of Bengal for the assistance against her countrymen. It is obvious if the Tikari chief helped Jeodhar Singh and Haidar Ali Khan, the Britishers had to face hardship in restoring peace and normalcy in the district of Gaya.

Kabiruddin Kha, the Shah of Sasaram also happened to be a staunch supporter of the supporter of the British. He always felt that his interests were bound with those of the Company's government. So when the revolt of 1857-59 broke out in August, 1857 in Bihar, he gave every help to the British authorities. He rejected the proposal of Babu Kunwar Singh to join the revolt. He felt that the Britishers could not be defeated at any cost. So with this end in view he remained loyalist. unto the last. He helped the authorities at Sasaram in arresting Nishan Singh in June, 1858. The lieutenant Governor of Bengal felt convinced that Shah Kabiruddin had offered praiseworthy aid and support to the government during the whole

progress of the rebellion. If he were rebellion, the mighty British power had to face grim situation in restoring peace and tranquillity in Sasaram.

Raja Jay Prakash Singh of Deo Munga had a long record of loyalty to the company's government. Since the time of Fateh Singh the Deo-Raja was in league with the Britishers. Raja Jay Prakash Singh provided all kinds of help to the alien government without any hesitation. He was full of enthusiasm and praise for the British masters. He had inherited a sense of loyalty to the British from his illustrious ancestors. It was quite fitness of things that he also rejected Kunwar Singh's appeal for joining the revolt. He was assured from the very beginning that Britishers would be ultimately victorious. Therefore, he did not miss any opportunity to prove his unflinching loyalty. He and his men rendered valuable services to the East India Company's government in crushing the revolt.



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